THE TRAGEDY OF *SOPHONISBA.*

Acted at the

THEATRE-ROYAL

IN

DRURY-LANE.

By His MAJESTY's Servants.

By Mr. *THOMSON.*

LONDON:

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MDCCXXX.

TO THE
QUEEN.

MADAM,

THE notice, Your MAJESTY has condeſcended to take of the following *Tragedy*, emboldens me to lay it, in the humbleſt manner, at Your MAJESTY's Feet. And to whom can this illuſtrious *Carthaginian* ſo properly fly for protection, as to a QUEEN, who commands the hearts of a *People*, more powerful at ſea than *Carthage*? more flouriſhing in *commerce* than thoſe *firſt Merchants*? more ſecure againſt conqueſt? and, under a

DEDICATION.

Monarchy, more free than a *Common-wealth* itſelf?

I dare not, nor indeed need I, here attempt a character, where both the great and the amiable Qualities ſhine forth in full perfection. All words are faint to ſpeak what is univerſally felt, and acknowledged, by a happy people. Permit me therefore only to ſubſcribe my ſelf, with the trueſt zeal and veneration,

MADAM,

Your MAJESTY'S

Moſt humble,

Moſt dutiful,

And moſt devoted

Servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

PREFACE.

IT is not my intention, in this preface, to defend any faults that may be found in the following piece. I am afraid there are too many: But thoſe who are beſt able to diſcover, will be moſt ready to pardon them. They alone know how difficult an undertaking the writing of a tragedy is: and this is a firſt attempt.

I beg leave only to mention the reaſon that determined me to make choice of this ſubject. What pleaſed me particularly, tho' perhaps it will not be leaſt liable to objection with ordinary readers, was the great ſimplicity of the ſtory. It is one, regular, and uniform, not charged with a multiplicity of incidents, and yet affording ſeveral revolutions of fortune; by which the paſſions may be excited, varied, and driven to their full tumult of emotion

This unity of deſign was always ſought after, and admired by the antients: and the moſt eminent among the moderns, who underſtood their writings, have choſen to imitate them in this, from an intire conviction that the reaſon of it muſt hold good in all ages. And here allow me to tranſlate a paſſage from the celebrated Monſieur Racine, which contains all that I have to ſay on this head.

" We muſt not fancy that this rule has no other
" foundation but the caprice of thoſe who made it. No-
" thing can touch us in tragedy, but what is probable.
" And what probability is there, that, in one Day,
" ſhould happen a multitude of things, which could
" ſcarce happen in ſeveral Weeks? There are ſome who
" think that this ſimplicity is a mark of barrenneſs of
" invention. But they do not conſider, that, on the

contrary

" *contrary, invention conſiſts in making ſomething out of* " *nothing: and that this huddle of incidents has always* " *been the refuge of poets, who did not find in their* " *genius either richneſs or force enough to engage their* " *ſpectators, for five acts together, by a ſimple action,* " *ſupported by the violence of paſſions, the beauty of* " *ſentiments, and the nobleneſs of expreſſion.*" — *I would not be underſtood to mean that all theſe things are to be found in my performance: I only ſhew the reader what I aimed at, and how I would have pleaſed him, had it been in my power.*

As to the character of Sophoniſba; *in drawing it, I have confined myſelf to the truth of hiſtory. It were an affront to the age, to ſuppoſe ſuch a character out of nature; eſpecially in a country which has produced ſo many great examples of public ſpirit and heroic virtues, even in the ſofter ſex: and I had deſtroyed her character intirely, had I not marked it with that ſtrong love to her country, diſdain of ſervitude, and inborn averſion to the* Romans, *by which all hiſtorians have diſtinguiſhed her. Nor ought her marrying* Maſiniſſa, *while her former huſband was ſtill alive, to be reckoned a blemiſh in her character. For, by the laws both of* Rome *and* Carthage, *the captivity of the huſband diſſolved the marriage of courſe; as among us impotence, or adultery: not to mention the reaſons of a moral and public nature, which I have put into her own mouth in the ſcene betwixt her and* Syphax.

This is all I have to ſay of the play itſelf. But I cannot conclude without owning my obligations to thoſe concerned in the repreſentation. They have indeed done me more than juſtice. Whatever was deſigned as amiable and engaging in Maſiniſſa *ſhines out in Mr.* Wilks's *action. Mrs.* Oldfield, *in the character of* Sophoniſba, *has excelled what, even in the fondneſs of an author, I could either wiſh or imagine. The grace, dignity, and happy variety of her action have been univerſally applauded, and are truly admirable.*

PROLOGUE.

By a FRIEND.

Spoken by Mr. *WILLIAMS.*

WHEN learning, after the long Gothic *night,*
Fair, o'er the weſtern world, renew'd his light,
With arts ariſing Sophoniſba *roſe:*
The tragic muſe, returning, wept her woes.
With her th' Italian *ſcene firſt learnt to glow;*
And the firſt tears for her were taught to flow.
Her charms the Gallic *muſes next inſpir'd:*
Corneille *himſelf ſaw, wonder'd, and was fir'd.*
What foreign theatres with pride have ſhewn,
Britain, *by juſter title, makes her own.*
When freedom is the cauſe, 'tis hers to fight;
And hers, when freedom is the theme, to write.
For this, a Britiſh Author *bids again*
The heroine riſe, to grace the Britiſh *ſcene.*
Here, as in life, ſhe breathes her genuine flame:
She aſks what boſom has not felt the ſame?
Aſks of the Britiſh Youth — *Is ſilence there?*
She dares to aſk it of the Britiſh Fair.
To night, our home-ſpun author would be true,
At once, to nature, hiſtory, and you.
Well-pleas'd to give our neighbours due applauſe,
He owns their learning, but diſdains their laws.
Not to his patient touch, or happy flame,
'Tis to his Britiſh *heart he truſts for fame.*
If France *excel him in one free-born thought,*
The man, as well as poet, is in fault.
Nature! *informer of the poet's art,*
Whoſe force alone can raiſe or melt the heart,
Thou art his guide; each paſſion, every line,
Whate'er he draws to pleaſe, muſt all be thine.
Be thou his judge: in every candid breaſt,
Thy ſilent whiſper is the ſacred teſt.

The

The Perſons repreſented.

MASINISSA, King of *Maſſylia*,	By	Mr. *Wilks*.
SYPHAX, King of *Maſæſylia*,		Mr. *Mills*.
NARVA, Friend to *Maſiniſſa*,		Mr. *Roberts*.
SCIPIO, the *Roman* General,		Mr. *Williams*.
LÆLIUS, his Lieutenant,		Mr. *Bridgewater*.
SOPHONISBA,		Mrs. *Oldfield*.
PHOENISSA, her Friend,		Mrs. *Roberts*.

Meſſenger, Slave, Guards, and Attendants.

SCENE

The Palace of *CIRTHA*.

SOPHONISBA.

A

TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

SOPHONISBA.

THIS hour, *Phœniſſa*, this important hour,
Or fixes me a queen, or from a throne
Throws *Sophoniſba* into *Roman* chains.
Deteſted thought! For now his utmoſt force
Collected, deſperate, diſtreſs'd, and ſore
From battles loſt; with all the rage of war,
Ill-fated *Syphax* makes his laſt effort.
But ſay, thou partner of my hopes and fears,
Phœniſſa, ſay; while, from the lofty tower,
Our ſtraining eyes the field of battle ſought,

Ah, thought you not that our *Numidian* troops
Gave up the broken field, and ſcattering fled,
Wild o'er the hills, from the rapacious ſons
Of ſtill triumphant *Rome?*

PHOENISSA.

The dream of care!
And think not, madam, *Syphax* can reſign,
But with his ebbing life, in this laſt field,
A crown, a kingdom, and a queen he loves
Beyond ambition's brighteſt wiſh; for whom,
Nor mov'd by threats, nor bound by plighted faith,
He ſcorn'd the *Roman* friendſhip (that fair name
For ſlavery) and from th' engagements broke
Of *Scipio*, fam'd for every winning art,
The towering genius of recover'd *Rome*.

SOPHONISBA.

Oh name him not! Theſe *Romans* ſtir my blood
To too much rage. I cannot bear the fortune
Of that proud people. — Said you not, *Phœniſſa*,
That *Syphax* lov'd me; which would fire his battle,
And urge him on to death or conqueſt? True,
He loves me with the madneſs of deſire;
His every paſſion is a ſlave to love;
Nor heeds he danger where I bid him go,
Nor leagues, nor intereſt. Hence theſe endleſs wars,
Theſe ravag'd countries, theſe ſucceſsleſs fights,
Suſtain'd for *Carthage*; whoſe defence alone
Engag'd my loveleſs marriage-vows with his.
But know you not, that in the *Roman* camp
I have a lover too; a gallant, brave,
And diſappointed lover, full of wrath,
Returning to a kingdom whence the ſword
Of *Syphax* drove him?

PHOENISSA.

Maſiniſſa?

SOPHONISBA.

He:
Young *Maſiniſſa*, the *Maſſylian* king,
The firſt addreſſer of my youth; for whom
My boſom felt a fond beginning wiſh,

Extin-

Extinguiſh'd ſoon; when once to *Scipio*'s ſide
Won o'er, and dazled by th' enchanting glare
Of that fair ſeeming heroe, he became
A gay admiring ſlave, yet knew it not.
E'er ſince, my heart has held him in contempt;
And thrown out each idea of his worth,
That there began to grow: nay had it been
As all-poſſeſt, and ſoft, as her's who ſits
In ſecret ſhades, or by the falling ſtream,
And waſtes her being in unutter'd pangs,
I would have broke, or cur'd it of its fondneſs.

PHOENISSA.

Heroic *Sophoniſba!*

SOPHONISBA.

No, *Phœniſſa*;
It is not for the daughter of great *Aſdrubal*,
Deſcended from a long illuſtrious line
Of *Carthaginian* heroes, who have oft
Fill'd *Italy* with terror and diſmay,
And ſhook the walls of *Rome*, to pine in love,
Like a deluded maid; to give her life,
And heart high-beating in her country's cauſe,
Meant not for common aims and houſhold cares,
To give them up to vain preſuming man;
Much leſs to one who ſtoops the neck to *Rome*,
An enemy to *Carthage*, *Maſiniſſa*.

PHOENISSA.

Think not I mean to check that glorious flame,
That juſt ambition which exalts your ſoul,
Fires on your cheek, and lightens in your eye.
Yet would he had been yours! this riſing prince;
For, truſt me, fame is fond of *Maſiniſſa*.
His various fortune, his reſplendent deeds,
His courage, conduct, deep-experienc'd youth,
And vaſt unbroken ſpirit in diſtreſs,
Still riſing ſtronger from the laſt defeat,
Are all the talk and terror too of *Afric*.
Who has not heard the ſtory of his woes?
How hard he came to his paternal reign;
Whence ſoon by *Syphax*' unrelenting hate,

And jealous *Carthage* driven, he with a few
Fled to the mountains. Then, I think, it was,
Hem'd in a circle of impending rocks,
That all his followers fell, ſave fifty horſe;
Who, thence eſcap'd thro' ſecret paths abrupt,
Gain'd the *Clupean* plain. There overtook,
And urg'd by fierce ſurrounding foes, he burſt
With four alone, ſore wounded, thro' their ranks,
And all amidſt a mighty torrent plung'd.
Seiz'd by the whirling gulph, two ſunk; and two,
With him obliquely hurried down the ſtream,
Wrought to the farther ſhore. Th'aſtoniſh'd troops
Stood check'd, and ſhivering on the gloomy brink,
And deem'd him loſt in the devouring flood.
Mean time the dauntleſs, undeſpairing youth
Lay in a cave conceal'd; curing his wounds
With mountain-herbs, and on his horſes fed:
Nor here, even at the loweſt ebb of life,
Stoop'd his aſpiring mind. What need I ſay,
How once again reſtor'd, and once again
Expell'd, among the *Garamantian* hills
He ſince has wander'd, till the *Roman* arm
Reviv'd his cauſe? And who ſhall reign alone,
Syphax or he, this day decides.

SOPHONISBA.

Enough.
Thou need'ſt not blazon thus his fame, *Phœniſſa*.
Were he as glorious as the pride of woman
Could wiſh, in all her wantonneſs of thought;
The joy of humankind; wiſe, valiant, good;
With every praiſe, with every laurel crown'd;
The warriour's wonder, and the virgin's ſigh:
Yet this would cloud him o'er, this blemiſh all;
His mean ſubmiſſion to the *Roman* yoke;
That, falſe to *Carthage*, *Afric*, and himſelf,
With proferr'd hand and knee, he hither led
Theſe ravagers of earth. — But while we talk,
The work of fate goes on; even now perhaps
My dying country bleeds in every vein,
And the warm victor thunders at our gate.

SCENE

SCENE II.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA, *and to them a* MESSENGER *from the Battle.*

SOPHONISBA.

Ha! Whence art thou? Speak, tho' thy bleeding wounds
Might well excuſe thy tongue.

MESSENGER.

Madam eſcap'd,
With much ado, from yon wide death—

SOPHONISBA.

No more.
At once thy meaning flaſhes o'er my ſoul.
Oh all my vaniſh'd hopes! repairleſs chance
Of undiſcerning war! — And is all loſt?
An univerſal havock?

MESSENGER.

Madam, all.
For ſcarce a *Maſæſylian*, ſave my ſelf,
But is or ſeiz'd, or bites the bloody plain.
The King—

SOPHONISBA.

Ah! what of him?

MESSENGER.

His fiery ſteed,
By *Maſiniſſa*, the *Maſſylian* prince,
Pierc'd, threw him headlong to his cluſtering foes;
And now he comes in chains.

SOPHONISBA.

'Tis wond'rous fit,
Abſolute gods! All *Afric* is in chains!
The weeping world in chains! — Oh is there not
A time,

A time, a righteous time, reſerv'd in fate,
When theſe oppreſſors of mankind ſhall feel
The miſeries they give; and blindly fight
For their own fetters too?—The conquering troops,
How points their motion?

MESSENGER.

At my heels they came,
Loud-ſhouting, dreadful, in a cloud of duſt,
By *Maſiniſſa* headed.

SOPHONISBA.

Hark! arriv'd.
The murmuring crowd rolls frighted to the palace.
Thou bleed'ſt to death, poor faithful wretch, away,
And dreſs thy wounds, if life be worth thy care;
Tho' *Rome*, methinks, will loſe a ſlave in thee.
Would *Sophoniſba* were as near the verge
Of boundleſs, and immortal liberty!

SCENE III.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

[*After a Pauſe.*]

SOPHONISBA.

And wherefore not? When liberty is loſt,
Let ſlaves and cowards live; but in the brave
It were a treachery to themſelves, enough
To merit chains. And is it fit for me,
Who in my veins, from *Aſdrubal* deriv'd,
Hold *Carthaginian* enmity to *Rome*;
On whom I've laviſh'd all my burning ſoul,
In everlaſting hate; for whoſe deſtruction
I ſold my joyleſs youth to *Syphax'* arms,
And turn'd him fierce upon them; fit for ſuch

A na-

A native, reſtleſs, unrelenting foe,
To ſit down ſoftly-penſive, and await
Th'approaching victor's rage; reſerv'd in chains
To grace his triumph, and become the ſcorn
Of every *Roman* dame—Gods! how my ſoul
Diſdains the thought! and this ſhall ſet it free.
[*Offers to ſtab her ſelf.*]

PHOENISSA.

Hold, *Sophoniſba*, hold! my friend! my queen!
For whom alone I live! hold your raſh point,
Nor thro your guardian boſom ſtab your country.
That is our laſt reſort, and always ſure.
The gracious gods are liberal of death;
To that laſt bleſſing lend a thouſand ways.
Think not I'd have you live to drag a chain,
And walk the triumph of inſulting *Rome*.
No, by theſe tears of loyalty and love!
E're I beheld ſo vile a ſight, this hand
Should urge the faithful ponyard to your heart,
And glory in the deed. But, while hope lives,
Let not the generous die. 'Tis late before
The brave deſpair.

SOPHONISBA.

Thou copy of my ſoul!
And now my friend indeed! Shew me but hope,
One glimpſe of hope, and I'll renew my toils,
Call patience, labour, fortitude again,
The vext unjoyous day, and ſleepleſs night;
Nor ſhrink at danger, any ſhape of death,
Shew me the ſmalleſt hope! Alas, *Phœniſſa*,
Too kindly confident! Hope lives not here,
Fled with her ſiſter Liberty beyond
The *Garamantian* hills, to ſome ſteep wild,
Some undiſcover'd country, where the foot
Of *Roman* cannot come.

PHOENISSA.

Yes, there ſhe liv'd
With *Maſiniſſa*, wounded, and forlorn,
Amidſt the ſerpents hiſs, and tygers yell.—

SOPHO-

SOPHONISBA.

Why nam'ſt thou him?

PHOENISSA.

Madam, in this forgive
My forward zeal; from him proceeds our hope.
He lov'd you once; nor is your form impair'd,
Warm'd, and unfolded into ſtronger charms:
Ask his protection from the *Roman* power,
You muſt prevail; for *Sophoniſba* ſure
From *Maſiniſſa* cannot ask in vain.

SOPHONISBA.

Now, by the prompting genius of my country!
I thank thee for the thought. True, there is pain
Ev'n in deſcending thus to beg protection
From that degenerate youth. But oh for thee,
My ſinking country! and again to gaul
This hated *Rome*, what would I not endure?
It ſhall be done, *Phœniſſa*; tho' diſguſt
Choak'd up my ſtruggling meaning, ſhall be done.
[*kneels.*

But here I vow, propitious *Juno*, hear!
Could every pomp and every pleaſure joyn'd,
Love, empire, glory, a whole kneeling world,
Unnerve my ſmalleſt purpoſe, and remit
That moſt inveterate enmity I bear
The *Roman* ſtate; may *Carthage* ſmoak in ruins!
Rome riſe the miſtreſs of mankind! and I,
There an abandon'd ſlave, drag out a length
Of life, in loathſome baſeneſs, and contempt!
This way the trumpet ſounds; let us retire.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

MASINISSA, SYPHAX *in Chains*, NARVA, *Guards*, &c.

SYPHAX.

Is there no dungeon in this city? dark,
As is my troubled ſoul? That thus I'm brought
To my own palace, to thoſe rooms of ſtate,
Wont in another manner to receive me,
With other ſigns of royalty than theſe.
(looking on his chains.)

MASINISSA.

I will not wound thee, not inſult thee, *Syphax*,
With a recital of thy tyrant crimes.
A captive here I ſee thee, fallen below
My moſt revengeful wiſh; and all the rage,
The noble fury that inſpir'd this morn,
Is ſunk to ſoft compaſſion. In the field,
The flaming front of war, there is the ſcene
Of brave revenge; and I have ſought thee there,
Keen as the hunted lyon ſeeks his foe.
But when a broken enemy, diſarm'd,
And helpleſs lies; a falling ſword, an eye
With pity flowing, and an arm as weak
As infant ſoftneſs, then becomes the brave.
Now ſleeps the ſword; the paſſions of the field
Subſide to peace; and my relenting ſoul
Melts at thy fate.

SYPHAX.

This, this, is all I dread,
All I deteſt, this inſolence refin'd,
This barbarous pity, this affected goodneſs
Pitied by thee! — Is there a form of death,

Of torture, and of infamy like that?
It kills my very ſoul! — Ye partial gods!
I feel your worſt; why ſhould I fear you more?
Hear me, vain youth! take notice — I abhor
Thy mercy, loath it. — Poiſon to my thoughts!
Wouldſt thou be merciful? One way alone
Thou canſt oblige me. — Uſe me like a ſlave;
As I would thee, (delicious thought!) wert thou
Here crouching in my power.

MASINISSA.

Outragious man!
If that is mercy, I'll be cruel ſtill.
Nor canſt thou drive me, by thy bittereſt rage,
To an unmanly deed; not all thy wrongs,
Nor this worſe triumph in them.

SYPHAX.

Ha! ha! wrongs?
I cannot wrong thee. When we lanch the ſpear
Into the monſter's heart, or cruſh the ſerpent;
Deſtroy what in antipathy we hold,
The common foe; can that be call'd a wrong?
Injurious that? Abſurd! it cannot be.

MASINISSA.

I'm loth to hurt thee more. — The tyrant works
Too fierce already in thy rankled breaſt.
But ſince thou ſeem'ſt to rank me with thy ſelf,
With great deſtroyers, with perfidious kings;
I muſt reply to thy licentious tongue,
Bid thee remember, whoſe accurſed ſword
Began this work of death; who broke the ties,
The holy ties, atteſted by the gods,
Which bind the nations in the bond of peace;
Who meanly took advantage of my youth,
Unſkill'd in arms, unſettled on my throne,
And drove me to the deſart, there to dwell
With kinder monſters; who my cities ſack'd,
My country pillag'd, and my ſubjects murder'd;
Who ſtill purſu'd me with inveterate hate,
When generous force prov'd vain, with ruffian arts,
The villain's dagger, baſe aſſaſſination.

And

And for no reaſon all. Brute violence
Alone thy plea. — What the leaſt provocation,
Say, canſt thou but pretend?

SYPHAX.

I needed none.
Nature has in my being ſown the ſeeds
Of enmity to thine. — Nay mark me this;
Couldſt thou reſtore me to my former ſtate,
Strike off theſe chains, give me the ſword again,
The ſceptre, and the wide-obedient war:
Yet muſt I ſtill, implacable to thee,
Seek eagerly thy death, or die my ſelf.
Life cannot hold us both! — Unequal gods!
Who love to diſappoint mankind, and take
All vengeance to your ſelves; why to the point
Of my long-flatter'd wiſhes did ye lift me,
Then ſink me thus ſo low? Juſt as I drew
The glorious ſtroke that was to make me happy,
Why did you blaſt my ſtrong extended arm?
Strike the dry ſword unſated to the ground?
But that to mock us is your cruel ſport?
What elſe is human life?

MASINISSA.

Thus always join'd
With an inhuman heart, and brutal manners,
Is irreligion to the ruling gods;
Whoſe ſchemes our peeviſh ignorance arraigns,
Our thoughtleſs pride. — Thy loſt condition, *Syphax*,
Is nothing to the tumult of thy breaſt.
There lies the ſting of evil, there the drop
That poiſons nature. — Ye myſterious powers!
Whoſe ways are ever-gracious, ever-juſt,
As ye think wiſeſt, beſt, diſpoſe of me;
But, whether thro' your gloomy depths I wander,
Or on your mountains walk; give me the calm
The ſteady, ſmiling ſoul; where wiſdom ſheds,
Eternal ſunſhine and eternal joy.
Then, if misfortune comes, ſhe brings along
The braveſt virtues. And ſo many great
Illuſtrious ſpirits have convers'd with woe,

(The pride of adverſe fate!) as are enough
To conſecrate diſtreſs, and make even death
Ambition.

SYPHAX.

Torture! Racks! The common trick
Of inſolent ſucceſs, unſuffering pride,
This prate of patience, and I know not what.
'Tis all a lie, impracticable rant;
And only tends to make me ſcorn thee more.
But why this talk? In mercy ſend me hence;
Yet— ere I go— Oh ſave me from diſtraction!
I know, hot youth, thou burneſt for my queen;
But by the majeſty of ruin'd kings,
And that commanding glory which ſurrounds her,
I charge thee touch her not!

MASINISSA.

No, *Syphax*, no.
Thou need'ſt not charge me. That were mean indeed,
A triumph that to thee. But could I ſtoop
Again to love her; Thou, what right haſt thou,
A captive to her bed? Nor life, nor queen,
Nor ought a captive has. All laws in this,
Roman and *Carthaginian*, all agree.

SYPHAX.

Here, here, begins the bitterneſs of death!
Here my chains grind me firſt!

MASINISSA.

Poor *Sophoniſba!*
She too becomes the prize of conquering *Rome*;
What moſt her heart abhors. Alas, how hard
Will ſlavery ſit on her exalted ſoul!
How piteous hard! But, if I know her well,
She never will endure it, ſhe will die.
For not a *Roman* burns with nobler ardor,
A higher ſenſe of liberty than ſhe;
And tho' ſhe marry'd thee, her only ſtain,
Falſe to my youth, and faithleſs to my vows;
Yet I muſt own it, from a worthy cauſe,
From publick ſpirit did her fault proceed.

SYPHAX.

SYPHAX.

Blue plagues, and poiſon on thy meddling tongue!
Talk not of her; for every word of her
Is a keen dagger, griding thro' my heart.
Oh, for a lonely dungeon! where I rather
Would talk with my own groans, and great revenge,
Than in the manſions of the bleſt with thee.
Hell! Whither muſt I go?

MASINISSA.

Unhappy man!
And is thy breaſt determin'd againſt peace,
On comfort ſhut?

SYPHAX.

On all, but death, from thee.

MASINISSA.

Narva, be *Syphax* thy peculiar care;
And uſe him well with tenderneſs and honour.
This evening *Lælius*, and to morrow *Scipio*,
To *Cirtha* come. Then let the *Romans* take
Their priſoner.

SYPHAX.

There ſhines a gleam of hope
Acroſs the gloom — From thee deliver'd! — Eaſe
Breathes in that thought — Lead on — My heart
grows lighter!

SCENE V.

MASINISSA *alone.*

What dreadful havoc in the human breaſt
The paſſions make, when unconfin'd, and mad,
They burſt unguided by the mental eye,
The light of reaſon; which in various ways
Points them to good, or turns them back from ill.
O ſave

O ſave me from the tumult of the ſoul!
From the wild beaſts within! — For circling ſands,
When the ſwift whirlwind whelms them o'er the lands;
The roaring deeps that to the clouds ariſe,
While thwarting thick the mingled lightning flies;
The monſter-brood to which this land gives birth,
The blazing city, and the gaping earth;
All deaths, all tortures, in one pang combin'd,
Are gentle to the tempeſt of the mind.

The End of the Firſt Act.

ACT II. SCENE I.

MASINISSA, NARVA.

MASINISSA.

——————'Tis true, my friend,
Thou good old man, by whom my youth was form'd,
The firm companion of my various life,
I own, 'tis true, that *Sophoniſba*'s image
Lives in my boſom ſtill; and at each glance
I take in ſecret of the bright idea,
A ſtrange diſorder ſeizes on my ſoul,
Which burns with ſtronger glory. Need I ſay,
How once ſhe had my vows? Till *Scipio* came,
Reſiſtleſs man! like a deſcending God,
And ſnatch'd me from the *Carthaginian* ſide
To nobler *Rome*; beneath whoſe laurel'd brow,
And ample eye, the nations grow polite,
Humane and happy. Then thou may'ſt remember,
Such is this woman's high impetuous ſpirit,
That all-controuling love ſhe bears her country,
Her *Carthage*; that at this ſhe ſacrific'd
To *Syphax*, unbelov'd, her blooming years,
And won him off from *Rome*.

NARVA.

My generous prince!
Applauding *Afric* of thy choice approves.
Fame claps her wings, and virtue ſmiles on thee,
Of peace thou ſoftner, and thou ſoul of war!
But oh beware of that fair foe to glory,
Woman! and moſt of *Carthaginian* woman!
Who has not heard of fatal *Punic* guile?
Of their ſly conqueſts? their inſidious leagues?

Their

Their *Aſdrubals?* their *Hannibals?* with all
Their wily heroes? And, if ſuch their men,
What muſt their women be?

MASINISSA.

You make me ſmile.
I thank thy honeſt zeal. But never dread
The firmneſs of my heart, my ſtrong attachment,
Severe to *Rome*, to *Scipio*, and to Glory.
Indeed, I cannot, would not quite forget
The grace of *Sophoniſba*; how ſhe look'd,
And talk'd, and mov'd, a *Pallas*, or a *Juno!*
Accompliſh'd even in trifles, when ſhe ſtoop'd
Ambition's flight, and with a ſoften'd eye
Gave her quick ſpirit into gayer life.
Then every word was livelineſs, and wit;
We heard the Muſes' ſong; and the dance ſwam
Thro' all the maze of harmony. I flatter not,
Believe me, *Narva*; yet my panting ſoul,
To *Scipio* taken in the fair purſuit
Of fame, and for my people's happineſs,
Reſign'd this *Sophoniſba*; and tho' now
Conſtrain'd by ſoft neceſſity to ſee her,
And ſhe a captive in my power, will ſtill
Reſign her.

NARVA.

Let me not doubt thy fortitude,
My *Maſiniſſa*, thy exalted purpoſe
Not to be loſt in love; but ah! we know not,
Oft, till experience ſighs it to the ſoul,
The boundleſs witchcraft of enſnaring woman,
And our own ſlippery hearts. From *Scipio* learn
The temperance of heroes. I'll recount
Th' inſtructive ſtory, what theſe eyes beheld;
Perhaps you've heard it; but 'tis pleaſing ſtill,
Tho' told a thouſand times.

MASINISSA.

I burn to hear it.
Loſt by my late misfortunes in the deſart,
I liv'd a ſtranger to the voice of fame,
To *Scipio*'s laſt exploits. Exalt me now.

Great

Great actions raiſe the mind. But when a friend,
A *Scipio* does them; then with more than wonder,
Even with a ſort of vanity we liſten.

NARVA.

When to his glorious, firſt eſſay in war,
New *Carthage* fell; there all the flower of *Spain*
Were kept in hoſtage; a full field preſenting
For *Scipio*'s generoſity to ſhine.
And then it was, that when the heroe heard
How I to thee belong'd, he with large gifts,
And friendly words diſmiſs'd me.

MASINISSA.

I remember.
And in his favour that impreſs'd me firſt.
But to thy ſtory.

NARVA.

What with admiration
Struck every heart, was this— A noble virgin,
Conſpicuous far o'er all the captive dames,
Was mark'd the general's prize. She wept, andbluſh'd,
Young, freſh, and blooming like the morn. An eye,
As when the blue ſky trembles thro' a cloud
Of pureſt white. A ſecret charm combin'd
Her features, and infus'd enchantment thro' them.
Her ſhape was harmony. — But eloquence
Beneath her beauty fails; which ſeem'd, on purpoſe,
Pour'd out by laviſh nature, that mankind
Might ſee this action in its higheſt luſtre.
Soft, as ſhe paſs'd along, with downcaſt eyes,
Where gentle ſorrow ſwell'd, and now and then
Dropt o'er her modeſt cheek a trickling tear;
The *Roman* legions languiſh'd; and hard war
Felt more than pity. Even *Scipio*'s ſelf,
As on his high tribunal rais'd he ſat,
Turn'd from the piercing ſight, and chiding aſk'd
His officers, if by this gift they meant
To cloud his glory in its very dawn.

MASINISSA.

Oh Gods! my fluttering heart! On, ſtop not, *Narva*.

NARVA.

She queſtion'd of her birth, in trembling accents,
With tears and bluſhes broken, told her tale.
But when he found her royally deſcended,
Of her old captive parents the ſole joy;
And that a hapleſs *Celtiberian* prince,
Her lover and belov'd, forgot his chains,
His loſt dominions, and for her alone
Wept out his tender ſoul; ſudden the heart
Of this young, conquering, loving, godlike *Roman*
Felt all the great divinity of virtue.
His wiſhing youth ſtood check'd, his tempting power,
By infinite humanity —

MASINISSA.

Well, well;
And then!

NARVA.

Diſdaining guilty doubt, at once
He for her parents and her lover call'd.
The various ſcene imagine: how his troops
Look'd dubious on, and wonder'd what he meant;
While ſtretch'd below the trembling ſuppliants lay,
Rack'd by a thouſand mingling paſſions, fear,
Hope, jealouſy, diſdain, ſubmiſſion, grief,
Anxiety, and love in every ſhape.
To theſe as different ſentiments ſucceeded,
As mixt emotions, when the man divine
Thus the dread ſilence to the lover broke.
" We both are young, both charm'd. The Right
" of War
" Has put thy beauteous miſtreſs in my power;
" With whom I could, in the moſt ſacred ties,
" Live out a happy life: but know that *Romans*
" Their hearts as well as enemies can conquer.
" Then take her to thy ſoul; and with her take
" Thy liberty and kingdom. In return
" I aſk but this. When you behold theſe eyes,
" Theſe charms, with tranſport; be a friend to *Rome*.

MASINISSA.

There ſpoke the ſoul of *Scipio* — But the Lovers?

NARVA.

NARVA.

Joy and extatic wonder held them mute;
While the lowd camp, and all the cluſtring crowd,
That hung around, rang with repeated ſhouts.
Fame took th' alarm, and thro' reſounding *Spain*
Blew faſt the fair report; which, more than arms,
Admiring nations to the *Romans* gain'd,

MASINISSA.

My friend in glory! thy awaken'd prince
Springs at thy faithful tale. It fires my ſoul,
And nerves each thought anew; apt oft perhaps,
Too much, too much to ſlacken into love.
But now the ſoft oppreſſion flies; and all
My mounting powers expand to deeds like thine,
Thou pattern and inſpirer of my fame,
Scipio, thou firſt of men, and beſt of friends!
What man of ſoul would live, my *Narva*, breathe
This idle-puffing element; and run,
Day after day, the ſtill-returning round
Of life's mean offices, and ſickly joys;
But in compaſſion to mankind? to be
A guardian God below? to diſſipate
An ardent being in heroic aims?
Do ſomething vaſtly great like what you told?
Something to raiſe him o'er the groveling herd,
And make him ſhine for ever? — Oh, my friend!
Bleed every vein about me; every nerve
With anguiſh tremble; every ſinew ake;
Be toil familiar to my limbs; ambition
Mix all my thoughts in an inceſſant whirl;
The third time may I loſe my kingdom; and again
Wander the falſe inhoſpitable Syrts;
Yet oh, ye liberal Gods! in rich award,
And ampleſt recompence — I aſk no more —
Share me the wreath of fame from *Scipio*'s brow!
But ſee, ſhe comes! mark her majeſtic port.

SCENE II.

MASINISSA, SOPHONISBA, NARVA, PHOENISSA.

SOPHONISBA.

Behold, victorious prince! the ſcene revers'd;
And *Sophoniſba* kneeling here; a captive,
O'er whom the Gods, thy Fortune, and thy Virtue,
Have given unqueſtion'd power of life and death.
If ſuch a one may raiſe her ſuppliant voice,
Once muſic to thy ear; if ſhe may touch
Thy knee, thy purple, and thy victor-hand;
Oh liſten, *Maſiniſſa!* Let thy ſoul
Intenſely liſten! While I fervent pray,
And ſtrong adjure thee, by that regal ſtate,
In which with equal pomp we lately ſhone!
By the *Numidian* name, our common boaſt!
And by thoſe houſhold gods! who may, I wiſh,
With better omens take thee to this palace,
Than *Syphax* hence they ſent. As is thy pleaſure,
In all beſide determine of my fate.
This, this alone I beg. Never, oh never!
Into the cruel, proud, and hated power
Of *Romans* let me fall. Since angry heaven
Will have it ſo, that I muſt be a ſlave,
And that a galling chain muſt bind theſe hands;
It were ſome little ſoftning in my doom,
To call a kindred ſon of the ſame clime,
A native of *Numidia*, my lord.
But if thou canſt not ſave me from the *Romans*,
If this ſad favour be beyond thy power;
At leaſt to give me death is what thou canſt.
Here ſtrike — My naked boſom courts thy ſword;
And my laſt breath ſhall bleſs thee, *Maſiniſſa!*

MASI-

MASINISSA.

Riſe, *Sophoniſba*, riſe. To ſee thee thus
Is a revenge I ſcorn; and all the man
Within me, though much injur'd by thy pride,
And ſpirit too tempeſtuous for thy ſex,
Yet bluſhes to behold thus at my feet,
Thus proſtrate low, her, for whom kings have kneel'd,
The faireſt, but the falſeſt of her ſex.

SOPHONISBA.

Spare thy reproach. — 'Tis cruel thus to loſe
In rankling diſcord, and ungenerous ſtrife,
The few remaining moments that divide me
From the laſt evil, bondage — *Roman* bondage!
Yes, ſhut thy heart againſt me; ſhut thy heart
Againſt compaſſion, every human thought,
Even recollected love: yet know, raſh Youth!
That when thou ſeeſt me ſwell their lofty triumph,
Thou ſeeſt thy ſelf in me. This is my day;
To morrow may be thine. But here, aſſur'd,
Here will I lie on this vile earth, forlorn,
Of hope abandon'd, ſince deſpis'd by thee;
Theſe locks all looſe and ſordid in the duſt;
This ſullied boſom growing to the ground,
Scorch'd up with anguiſh, and of every ſhape
Of miſery full: till comes the ſoldier fierce
From recent blood; and, in thy very eye,
Lays raging his rude ſanguinary graſp
On theſe weak limbs; and clinches them in chains.
Then if no friendly ſteel, no nectar'd draught
Of deadly poiſon, can enlarge my ſoul;
It will indignant burſt from a ſlave's body;
And, join'd to mighty *Dido*, ſcorn ye all.

MASINISSA.

Oh *Sophoniſba!* 'tis not ſafe to hear thee;
And I miſtook my heart, to truſt it thus.
Hence let me fly.

SOPHONISBA.

You ſhall not, *Maſiniſſa!*
Here will I hold you, tremble here for ever;
Here unremitting grow, till you conſent.

And

And can'ſt thou think, oh! canſt thou think to leave me?
Expos'd, defenceleſs, wretched, here alone?
A prey to *Romans* fluſh'd with blood and conqueſt?
The ſubject of their ſcorn or baſer love?
Sure *Maſiniſſa* cannot; and, tho' chang'd,
Tho' cold as that averted look he wears;
Sure love can ne'er in generous breaſts be loſt
To that degree, as not from ſhame and outrage
To ſave what once they lov'd.

MASINISSA.

Enchantment! Madneſs!
What would'ſt thou, *Sophoniſba?* — Oh my heart!
My treacherous heart!

SOPHONISBA.

What would I, *Maſiniſſa?*
My mean requeſt ſits bluſhing on my cheek.
To be thy ſlave, young prince, is what I beg;
Here *Sophoniſba* kneels to be thy ſlave;
Yet kneels in vain. But thou'rt a ſlave thy ſelf,
And canſt not from the *Romans* ſave one woman;
Her, who was once the triumph of thy ſoul;
Ere they ſeduc'd it by their lying glory.
Immortal gods! and am I fallen ſo low?
Scorn'd by a lover? by a ſlave to *Rome?*
Nought can be worth this baſeneſs, life, nor empire!
I loath me for it. — On this kinder earth,
Then leave me, leave me, to deſpair and death!

MASINISSA.

What means this conflict with almighty nature?
With the whole warring heart? — Riſe, quickly riſe,
In all the conquering majeſty of charms,
O *Sophoniſba*, riſe! while here I ſwear,
By the tremendous powers that rule mankind!
By heaven and earth, and hell! by love, and glory!
The *Romans* ſhall not hurt you — *Romans* cannot;
For *Rome* is generous as the gods themſelves,
And honours, not inſults, a generous foe.
Yet ſince you dread them, take this ſacred pledge,
This hand of ſurety, by which kings are bound;

By

By which I hold you mine, and vow to treat you,
With all the reverence due to ruin'd ſtate,
With all the ſoftneſs of remember'd love,
All that can ſooth thy fate, and make thee happy.

SOPHONISBA.

I thank thee, *Maſiniſſa!* now the ſame;
The ſame warm youth, exalted, full of ſoul;
With whom in happier days I wont to paſs
The ſighing hour: while, dawning fair in love,
All ſong and ſweetneſs, life ſet joyous out;
Ere the black tempeſt of ambition roſe,
And drove us different ways. — Thus dreſs'd in war,
In nodding plumes, o'ercaſt with ſullen thought,
With purpos'd vengeance dark, I knew thee not;
But now breaks out the beauteous ſun anew,
The gay *Numidian* ſhines who warm'd me once,
Whoſe love was glory. — Vain ideas, hence!
— Long ſince my heart, to nobler paſſions known,
Has your acquaintance ſcorn'd.

MASINISSA.

Oh! while you talk,
Enchanting fair one! my deluded thought
Runs back to days of love; when fancy ſtill
Found worlds of beauty, ever riſing new
To the tranſported eye; when flattering hope
Form'd endleſs proſpects of increaſing bliſs;
And ſtill the credulous heart believ'd them all,
Even more than love could promiſe. — But the ſcene
Is full of danger for a tainted eye;
I muſt not, dare not, will not look that way.
O hide it, wiſdom, glory, from my view!
Or in ſweet ruin I ſhall ſink again.
Diſaſter clouds thy cheek; thy colour goes.
Retire, and from the troubles of the day
Repoſe thy weary ſoul; worn out with care,
And rough unhappy thought.

SOPHONISBA.

May *Maſiniſſa*
Ne'er want the goodneſs he has ſhewn to me.

SCENE

SCENE III.

MASINISSA, NARVA.

MASINISSA.

The danger's o'er, I've heard the *Syren*'s ſong,
Yet ſtill to glory hold my ſteady courſe.
I mark'd thy kind concern, thy friendly fears,
And own them juſt; for ſhe has beauty, *Narva*,
So full, ſo perfect, with ſo great a ſoul
Inform'd, ſo pointed high with ſpirit,
As ſtrikes like lightning from the hand of *Jove*,
And raiſes love to glory.

NARVA.

Ah, my Prince!
Too true, it is too true; her fatal charms
Are powerful, and to *Maſiniſſa*'s heart
But know the way too well. And art thou ſure,
That the ſoft poiſon, which within thy veins
Lay unextinguiſh'd, is not rouz'd a new?
Is not this moment working thro' thy ſoul?
Doſt thou not love? Confeſs.

MASINISSA.

What ſaid my friend,
Of poiſon? love? of loving *Sophoniſba?*
Yes, I admire her, wonder at her beauty;
And he who does not is as dull as earth,
The cold unanimated form of man,
Ere lighted up with the celeſtial fire.
Where'er ſhe goes ſtill admiration gazes,
And liſtens while ſhe talks. Even thou thy ſelf,
Who ſaw'ſt her with the malice of a friend,
Even thou thy ſelf admir'ſt her. — Doſt thou not?
Say, ſpeak ſincerely.

NARVA.

NARVA.

She has Charms indeed;
But has ſhe charms like virtue? Tho' majeſtic;
Does ſhe command us, is her force like glory?

MASINISSA.

All glory's in her eye! Perfection thence
Looks from his throne; and on her ample brow
Sits majeſty. Her features glow with life,
Warm with heroic ſoul. Her mien! — ſhe walks,
As when a towering goddeſs treads this earth.
But when her language flows; when ſuch a one
Deſcends to ſooth, to ſigh, to weep, to graſp
The tottering knee; oh! *Narva*, *Narva*, oh!
Expreſſion here is dumb.

NARVA.

Alas! my Lord,
Is this the talk of ſober admiration?
Are theſe the ſallies of a heart at eaſe?
Of *Scipio*'s friend? And was it the calm ſenſe
Of fair perfection, that, the while ſhe kneel'd
For what you raſhly promis'd, ſeiz'd your ſoul;
Stole out in ſecret tranſports from your eye;
That writh'd you groaning round, and ſhook your frame.

MASINISSA.

I tell thee once again, too cautious man,
That when a woman begs, a matchleſs woman,
A woman once belov'd, a fallen queen,
A *Sophoniſba!* when ſhe twines her charms
Around our ſoul, and all her power of looks,
Of tears, of ſighs, of ſoftneſs, plays upon us;
He's more or leſs than man who can reſiſt her.
For me, my ſtedfaſt ſoul approves, nay more,
Exults in the protection it has promis'd.
And nought, tho' plighted honour did not bind me,
Shall ſhake the happy purpoſe of my heart;
Nought, by th'avenging gods! who heard my vow,
And hear me now again.

NARVA.

And was it then
For this you conquer'd?

MASINISSA.

Yes, and triumph in it.
This was my fondeſt wiſh; the very point,
The plume of glory, the delicious prize
Of bleeding years. And I had been a brute,
A greater monſter than *Numidia* breeds,
A horror to my ſelf; if on the ground,
Caſt vilely from me, I th'illuſtrious fair one
Had left to bondage, bitterneſs, and death.
Nor is there ought in war worth what I feel;
In pomp and hollow ſtate, like this ſweet ſenſe
Of infelt bliſs; which the reflection gives me,
Of ſaving thus ſuch excellence and beauty
From her ſupreme abhorrence.

NARVA.

Maſiniſſa,
My friend! my royal lord! alas! you ſlide,
You ſink from virtue. On the giddy brink
Of fate you ſtand. — One ſtep, and all is loſt!

MASINISSA.

No more, no more! if this is being loſt.
If this, miſtaken! is forſaking virtue,
And ruſhing down the precipice of fate;
Then down I go, far far beyond the din
Of ſcrupulous dull precaution. — Leave me, *Narva*.
I want to be alone, to find ſome Shade,
Some ſolitary gloom; there to ſhake off
This weight of life, this tumult of mankind,
This ſick ambition on it ſelf recoiling;
And there to liſten to the gentle voice,
The ſigh of peace, ſomething, I know not what,
That whiſpers tranſport to my heart. — Farewel.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

NARVA *alone.*

Struck, and he knows it not. — So when the field,
Elate in heart, the warriour ſcorns to yield;
The ſtreaming blood can ſcarce convince his eyes;
Nor will he feel the wound by which he dies.

The End of the Second Act.

ACT III. SCENE I.

MASINISSA *alone.*

IN vain I wander thro' the ſhade for peace;
'Tis with the calm alone, the pure of heart,
That there the goddeſs talks— But in my breaſt
Some buſy thought, ſome ſecret-eating pang,
Throbs inexpreſſible; and rowls from— What?
From charm to charm, on *Sophoniſba* ſtill
Earneſt, intent, devoted all to her.
Oh it muſt out! — 'Tis love, almighty love!
Returning on me with a ſtronger tide.
I'll doubt no more, but give it up to love.
Come to my breaſt, thou roſy-ſmiling god!
Come unconfin'd! bring all thy joys along,
All thy ſoft cares, and mix them copious here.
But why invoke I thee? Thy power is weak,
To *Sophoniſba*'s eye, thy quiver poor,
To the reſiſtleſs lightning of her form;
And dull thy bare inſinuating arts,
To the ſweet mazes of her flowing tongue.
Quick, let me fly to her; and there forget
This tedious abſence, war, ambition, noiſe,
Even friendſhip's ſelf, the vanity of fame,
And all but love, for love is more than all!

SCENE

SCENE II.

MASINISSA, NARVA.

MASINISSA.

Welcome again, my friend, — Come nearer, *Narva*;
Lend me thine arm, and I will tell thee all,
Unfold my ſecret heart, whoſe every pulſe
With *Sophoniſba* beats. — Nay hear me out —
Swift, as I mus'd, the conflagration ſpread;
At once too ſtrong, too general, to be quench'd.
I love, and I approve it, doat upon her,
Even think theſe minutes loſt I talk with thee.
Heavens! what emotions have poſſeſs'd my ſoul!
Snatch'd by a moment into years of paſſion.

NARVA.

Ah *Maſiniſſa*! —

MASINISSA.

Argue not againſt me.
Talk down the circling winds that lift the deſart;
And, touch'd by Heaven, when all the foreſts blaze,
Talk down the flame, but not my ſtronger love.
I have for love a thouſand thouſand reaſons,
Dear to the heart, and potent o'er the ſoul.
My ready thoughts all riſing, reſtleſs all,
Are a perpetual ſpring of tenderneſs;
Oh! *Sophoniſba! Sophoniſba!* oh!

NARVA.

Is this deceitful day then come to nought?
This day, that ſet thee on a double throne?
That gave thee *Syphax* chain'd, thy deadly foe?
With perfect conqueſt crown'd thee, perfect glory?
Is it ſo ſoon eclips'd? and does yon ſun,
Yon ſetting ſun, who this fair morning ſaw thee

Ride through the ranks of long extended war,
As radiant as himſelf; with every glance
Wheeling the pointed files; and, when the ſtorm
Began, beheld thee tread the riſing ſurge
Of battle high, and drive it on the foe;
Does he now, bluſhing, ſee thee ſunk ſo weak?
Caught in a ſmile? the captive of a look?
I cannot name it without tears.

MASINISSA.

Away!
I'm ſick of war, of the deſtroying trade,
Smooth'd o'er, and gilded with the name of glory.
Thou need'ſt not ſpread the martial field to me;
My happier eyes are turn'd another way,
Behold it not; or, if they do, behold it
Shrunk up, far off, a viſionary ſcene;
As to the waking man appears the dream.

NARVA.

Or rather as realities appear,
The virtue, pomp, and dignities of life,
In ſick diſorder'd dreams.

MASINISSA.

Think not I ſcorn
The taſk of heroes, when oppreſſion rages,
And lawleſs violence confounds the world.
Who would not bleed with tranſport for his country,
Tear every dear relation from his heart,
And greatly die to make a people happy;
Ought not to taſte of happineſs himſelf,
And is low-ſoul'd indeed — But ſure, my friend,
There is a time for love, or life were vile!
A ſickly circle of revolving days,
Led on by hope, with ſenſeleſs hurry fill'd,
And cloſ'd by diſappointment. Round and round,
Still hope for ever wheels the daily cheat;
Impudent hope! unjoyous madneſs all!
Till love comes ſtealing in, with his kind hours,
His healing lips, his cordial ſweets, his cares.
Infuſing joy, his joys ineffable!
That make the poor account of life compleat,

And

And juſtify the Gods.

NARVA.

Miſtaken Prince,
I blame not love. But —

MASINISSA.

Slander not my paſſion.
I've ſuffer'd thee too far. — Take heed, old man. —
Love will not bear an accuſation, *Narva*.

NARVA.

I'll ſpeak the truth, when truth and friendſhip call,
Nor fear thy frown unkind. — Thou haſt no right
To *Sophoniſba*; ſhe belongs to *Rome*.

MASINISSA.

Ha! ſhe belongs to *Rome*.—'Tis true — My thoughts
Where have you wander'd, not to think of this?
Think e'er I promis'd? e'er I lov'd? — Confuſion!
I know not what I ſay — I ſhould have lov'd,
Tho' *Jove* in muttering thunder had forbid it.
But *Rome* will not refuſe ſo ſmall a boon,
Whoſe gifts are kingdoms; *Rome* muſt grant it ſure,
One captive to my wiſh, one poor requeſt,
So ſmall to them, but oh ſo dear to me!
Here let my heart confide.

NARVA.

Deluſive love!
Thro' what wild projects is the frantick mind
Beguil'd by thee? — And think'ſt thou that the *Romans*,
The ſenators of *Rome*, theſe gods on earth,
Wiſe, ſteady to the right, ſeverely juſt,
All incorrupt, and like eternal fate
Not to be mov'd, will liſten to the ſigh
Of idle love? They, when their country calls,
Who know no pain, no tenderneſs, no joy,
But bid their children bleed before their eyes;
That they'll regard the light fantaſtick pangs
Of a fond heart? and with thy kingdom give thee
Their moſt inveterate foe; from their firm ſide,
Like *Syphax*, to delude thee? and the point
Of their own bounty on themſelves to turn?

Thou

Thou canſt not hope it ſure. — Impoſſible!

MASINISSA.

What ſhall I do? — Be now the friend exerted.
For love and honour preſs me; love and honour,
All that is dear and excellent in life,
All that or ſooths the man or lifts the heroe,
Bind my ſoul deep.

NARVA.

Raſh was your vow, my lord.
I know not what to counſel. — When you vow'd,
You vow'd what was not in your power to grant;
And therefore 'tis not binding.

MASINISSA.

Never! Never!
Oh never will I falſify that vow!
E'er then deſtruction ſeize me! Yes, ye *Romans*,
If it be ſo, there, take your kingdoms back,
Your royal gewgaws, all for *Sophoniſba!*
Hold, — Let me think a while — It ſhall be ſo!
By all th'inſpiring gods that prompt my thought!
This very night ſhall ſolemnize our vows;
And the next joyous ſun, that viſits *Afric*,
See *Sophoniſba* ſeated on my throne. —
Then if they ſpare her not, — not ſpare my queen, —
Perdition on their ſtubborn pride call'd virtue!
Be theirs the world, but *Sophoniſba* mine!

NARVA.

And is it poſſible, ye Gods, that rule us!
Can *Maſiniſſa* in his pride of youth,
In his meridian glory ſhining wide,
The light of *Afric*, and the friend of *Scipio*;
He take a woman to the nuptial bed,
Who ſcorn'd him for a tyrant, old, and peeviſh,
His rancorous foe? and gave her untouch'd bloom,
Her ſpring of charms to *Syphax?*

MASINISSA.

Horrid friendſhip!
This, this, has thrown a ſerpent to my heart;
While it o'erflow'd with tenderneſs, with joy,

With

With all the ſweetneſs of exulting love.
Now nought but gall is there, and burning poiſon!
Yes, it was ſo! — Curſe on her vain ambition!
What had her medling ſex to do with ſtates?
The Buſineſs of men! For him! for *Syphax!*
Forſook for him! my love for his groſs paſſion!
The thought is hell! — Oh I had treaſur'd up
A world of indignation, years of ſcorn;
But her ſad ſuppliant witchcraft ſooth'd it down.
Where is ſhe now? That it may burſt upon her;
Bear her unbounded from me, down the torrent,
Far, far away! And tho' my plighted faith,
Shall ſave her from the *Romans*, yet to tell her,
That I will never, never ſee her more!
Ha! there ſhe comes. — Pernicious fair one! — Leave me.

SCENE III.

SOPHONISBA, MASINISSA.

SOPHONISBA.

Forgive this quick return. — The rage, confuſion,
And mingled paſſions of this luckleſs day,
Made me forget another warm requeſt
I had to beg of generous *Maſiniſſa*;
For oh to whom, ſave to the generous, can
The miſerable fly? — But much diſturb'd
You look, and ſcowl upon me a denial.
Repentance frowns on your contracted brow.
Already, weary of my ſinking fate,
You ſeem to droop; and for unhappy *Syphax*
I ſhall implore in vain.

MASINISSA.

For *Syphax?* vengeance!
And canſt thou mention him? Oh grant me breath!

SOPHONISBA.

I know, young prince, how deep he has provok'd thee;
How keen he ſought thy youth; thro' what a fire
Of great diſtreſs, from which you come the brighter.
On dull indifferent objects, or perhaps
Diſlik'd a little, 'tis but common bounty
To ſhower relief; but when our bittereſt foe
Lies ſunk, diſarm'd, and deſolate, then! then!
To feel the mercies of a pitying God,
To raiſe him from the duſt, and that beſt way
To triumph o'er him, is heroic goodneſs.
Oh let unhappy *Syphax* touch thy heart,
Victorious *Maſiniſſa!*

MASINISSA.

Monſtrous this!
Still doſt thou blaſt me with that curſed name!
The very name thy conſcious guilt ſhould ſhun.
Oh had he heap'd all ills upon my head,
While it was young, and for the ſtorm unfit;
Had he but driven me from my native throne,
From regal pomp and luxury, to dwell
Among the foreſt beaſts; to bear the beam
Of red *Numidian* ſuns, and the rank dew
Of cold unſhelter'd nights; to mix with wolves,
To hunt with hungry tygers for my prey,
And thirſt with *Dipſas* on the burning ſand;
I could have thank'd him for his angry leſſon;
The fair occaſion that his rage afforded
Of learning patience, fortitude, and hope,
Still riſing ſtronger on incumbent fate,
And all that try'd humanity can dictate.
But there is one curs'd bitterneſs behind,
One injury, the man can never pardon;
That ſcorches up the tear in pity's eye,
And even ſweet mercy's ſelf converts to gall.
I cannot — will not name it — Heart of anguiſh!
Down! down!

SOPHO-

SOPHONISBA.

Ah! whence this ſudden ſtorm? this madneſs,
That hurries all thy ſoul?

MASINISSA.

And doſt thou aſk?
Aſk thy own faithleſs heart; ſnatch'd from my Vows,
From the warm wiſhes of my ſpringing youth,
And given to that old hated monſter, *Syphax*.
Perfidious *Sophoniſba!*

SOPHONISBA.

Nay no more.
With too much truth I can return thy charge.
Why didſt thou drive me to that cruel choice?
Why leave me, with my country, to deſtruction?
Why break thy love? thy faith? and join the *Romans?*

MASINISSA.

By heavens! the *Romans* were my better genius,
Sav'd me from fate, and form'd my youth to glory;
But for the *Romans* I had been a ſavage,
A wretch like *Syphax*, a forgotten thing,
The tool of *Carthage*.

SOPHONISBA.

Meddle not with *Carthage*,
Impatient youth, for that I will not bear;
Tho' here I were a thouſand fold thy ſlave.
Not one baſe word of *Carthage* — on thy ſoul!

MASINISSA.

How vain thy phrenzy! Go, command thy ſlaves,
Thy fools, thy *Syphaxes*; but I will ſpeak,
Speak loud of *Carthage*, call it falſe, ungenerous,
—Yet ſhall I check me, ſince it is thy country?
While the *Romans* are the light, the glory —

SOPHONISBA.

Romans!
Perdition on the *Romans!* — and almoſt
On thee too — *Romans* are the ſcourge
Of the red world, deſtroyers of mankind,
The ruffians, ravagers of earth; and all

Beneath the ſmooth diſſimulating maſk
Of juſtice, and compaſſion; as if ſlave
Was but another name for civiliz'd.
All vengeance on the *Romans!* — While fair *Carthage*
Unblemiſh'd riſes on the baſe of commerce;
And aſks of heaven nought but the general winds,
And common tides, to carry plenty, joy,
Civility, and grandeur, round the world.

MASINISSA.

No more compare them! for the gods themſelves
Declare for *Rome*.

SOPHONISBA.

It was not always ſo.
The gods declar'd for *Hannibal*; when *Italy*
Blaz'd all around him, all her ſtreams ran blood,
All her incarnate vales were vile with death;
And when at *Trebia*, *Thraſymene*, and *Cannæ*,
The *Carthaginian* ſword with *Roman* blood
Was drunk — Oh that he then, on that dread day,
While lifeleſs conſternation blacken'd *Rome*,
Had raz'd th' accurſed city to the ground,
And ſav'd the world! — When will it come again,
A day ſo glorious, and ſo big with vengeance,
On thoſe my ſoul abhors?

MASINISSA.

Avert it heaven!
The *Romans* not enſlave, but ſave the world
From *Carthaginian* rage. —

SOPHONISBA.

I'll bear no more!
Nor tenderneſs, nor life, nor liberty,
Nothing ſhall make me bear it. — Periſh *Rome!*
And all her menial friends! — Yes, rather, rather,
Deteſted as ye are, ye *Romans*, take me,
Oh pitying take me to your nobler chains!
And ſave me from this abject youth, your ſlave!
— How canſt thou kill me thus? —

MASINISSA.

I meant it not.
I only meant to tell thee, haughty fair one!

How

How this alone might bind me to the *Romans*;
That, in a frail and ſliding hour, they ſnatch'd me
From the perdition of thy love; which fell,
Like baleful lightning, where I moſt could wiſh,
And prov'd deſtruction to my mortal foe.
Oh pleaſing! fortunate!

SOPHONISBA.

I thank them too.
By heavens! for once, I love them; ſince they turn'd
My better thoughts from thee, thou — But I will not
Give thee the name, thy mean ſervility
From my juſt ſcorn deſerves.

MASINISSA.

Oh freely call me,
By every name thy fury can inſpire;
Enrich me with contempt — I love no more —
It will not hurt me, *Sophoniſba*. — Love,
Long ſince I gave it to the paſſing winds,
And would not be a lover for the world.
A lover is the very fool of nature;
Made ſick by his own wantonneſs of thought,
His feaver'd fancy: while, to your own charms
Imputing all, you ſwell with boundleſs pride.
Shame on the wretch! who ſhould be driven from men,
To live with *Aſian* ſlaves, in one ſoft herd,
All wretched, all ridiculous together.
For me, this moment, here I mean to bid
Farewel, a glad farewel to love and thee.

SOPHONISBA.

With all my ſoul, farewel! — Yet, ere you go;
Know that my ſpirit burns as high as thine,
As high to glory, and as low to love.
Thy promiſes are void; and I abſolve thee,
Here in the preſence of the liſtning gods. —
Take thy repented vows — To proud *Cornelia*
I'd rather be a ſlave, to *Scipio*'s mother;
Than queen of all *Numidia*, by the favour
Of him, who dares inſult the helpleſs thus.
(*Paſſing.*)

Still

Still doſt thou ſtay? behold me then again,
Hopeleſs, and wild, a loſt abandon'd ſlave.
And now thy brutal purpoſe muſt be gain'd.
Away, thou cruel, and ungenerous, go!

MASINISSA.

No, not for worlds would I reſume my vow!
Diſhonour blaſt me then! all kind of ills
Fill up my cup of bitterneſs, and ſhame!
When I reſign thee to triumphant *Rome*.
Oh lean not thus dejected to the ground!
The ſight is miſery. — what roots me here?
(*Aſide*)
Alas! I have urg'd my fooliſh heart too far;
And love depreſs'd recoils with greater force.
Oh *Sophoniſba!*

SOPHONISBA.

By thy pride ſhe dies.
Inhuman prince!

MASINISSA.

Thine is the conqueſt, nature!
By heaven and earth! I cannot hold it more.
Wretch that I was! to cruſh th' unhappy thus;
The faireſt too, the deareſt of her ſex!
For whom my ſoul could dye!—Turn, quickly turn,
O *Sophoniſba!* my belov'd! my glory!
Turn and forgive the violence of love,
Of love that knows no bounds!

SOPHONISBA.

And can it be?
Can that ſoft paſſion prove ſo fierce of heart,
As on the tears of miſery, the ſighs
Of death, to feaſt? to torture what it loves?

MASINISSA.

Yes it can be, thou goddeſs of my ſoul!
Whoſe each emotion is but varied love,
All over love, its powers, its paſſions, all:
Its anger, indignation, fury, love;
Its pride, diſdain, even deteſtation, love;
And when it, wild, reſolves to love no more,
Then is the triumph of exceſſive love.

Didſt

Didſt thou not mark me? mark the dubious rage,
That tore my heart with anguiſh while I talk'd?
Thou didſt; and muſt forgive ſo kind a fault.
What would thy trembling lips?

SOPHONISBA.

That I muſt die.
For ſuch another ſtorm, ſo much contempt
Thrown out on *Carthage*, ſo much praiſe on *Rome*,
Were worſe than death. Why ſhould I longer tire
My weary fate? The moſt relentleſs *Roman*
What could he more?

MASINISSA.

Oh *Sophoniſba*, hear!
See me thy ſuppliant now. Talk not of death.
I have no life but thee. — Alas! Alas!
Hadſt thou a little tenderneſs for me,
The ſmalleſt part of what I feel, thou wouldſt —
What wouldſt thou not forgive? But how indeed
How can I hope it? Yet I from this moment,
Will ſo devote my being to thy pleaſure,
So live alone to gain thee; that thou muſt,
If there is human nature in thy breaſt,
Feel ſome relenting warmth.

SOPHONISBA.

Well, well, 'tis paſt.
To be inexorable ſuits not ſlaves.

MASINISSA.

Spare, ſpare that word; it ſtabs me to the ſoul;
My crown, my life, and liberty are thine.
Oh give my paſſion way! My heart is full,
Oppreſs'd by love; and I could number tears,
With all the dews that ſprinkle o'er the morn;
While thus with thee converſing, thus with thee
Even happy to diſtreſs. — Enough, enough,
Have we been cheated by the trick of ſtate,
For *Rome* and *Carthage* ſuffer'd much too long;
And led, by gaudy fantoms, wander'd far,
Far from our bliſs. But now ſince met again,
Since here I hold thee, circle all perfection,
The prize of life! ſince fate too preſſes hard,

Since

Since *Rome* and ſlavery drive thee to the brink;
Let this immediate night exchange our vows,
Secure my bliſs, our future fortunes blend,
Set thee, the queen of beauty, on my throne,
And make it doubly mine. — A wretched gift
To what my love could give!

SOPHONISBA.

What? marry thee?
This night?

MASINISSA.

Thou dear one! yes, this very night,
Let injur'd *Hymen* have his rights reſtor'd,
And bind our broken vows. — Think, ſerious, think!
On what I plead. — A thouſand reaſons urge. —
Captivity diſſolves thy former marriage;
And if 'tis with the meaneſt vulgar ſo,
Can *Sophoniſba* to a ſlave, to *Syphax*,
The moſt exalted of her ſex, be bound?
Beſides it is the beſt, perhaps ſole way,
To ſave thee from the *Romans*; and muſt ſure
Bar their pretenſions: or if ruin comes,
To periſh with thee is to periſh happy.

SOPHONISBA.

Yet muſt I ſtill inſiſt.—

MASINISSA.

It ſhall be ſo.
I know thy purpoſe; it would plead for *Syphax*.
He ſhall have all, thou deareſt! ſhall have all,
Crowns, trifles, kingdoms, all again, but thee,
But thee, thou more than all!

SOPHONISBA.

(Aſide)

Bear witneſs heaven!
This is alone for *Carthage*.

(To him)

Gain'd by goodneſs,
I may be thine. Expect no love, no ſighing.
Perhaps, hereafter, I may learn again
To hold thee dear. If on theſe terms thou canſt,

Here

Here take me, take me, to thy wiſhes.

MASINISSA.

Yes,
Yes, *Sophoniſba!* as a wretch takes life
From off the bleeding rack. — All wild with joy,
Thus hold thee, preſs thee, to my bounding heart;
And bleſs the bounteous Gods. — Can heaven give more?
Oh happy! happy! happy! — Come, my fair,
This ready minute ſees thy will perform'd;
From *Syphax* knocks his chains; and I my ſelf,
Even in his favour, will requeſt the *Romans*.
Oh, thou haſt ſmil'd my paſſions into peace!
So, while conflicting winds embroil'd the Seas,
In perfect bloom, warm with immortal blood,
Young *Venus* rear'd her o'er the raging flood;
She ſmil'd around, like thine her beauties glow'd;
When ſmooth, in gentle ſwells, the ſurges flow'd;
Sunk, by degrees, into a liquid plain;
And one bright calm ſat trembling on the main.

The End of the Third Act.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

PHOENISSA.

HAIL queen of *Maſæſylia* once again!
And fair *Maſſylia* join'd! This riſing day
Saw *Sophoniſba*, from the height of life,
Thrown to the very brink of ſlavery:
State, honours, armies vanquiſh'd; nothing left
But her own great unconquerable mind.
And yet, ere evening comes, to larger power
Reſtor'd, I ſee my royal friend; and kneel
In grateful homage to the Gods, and her.
Ye Powers, what awful changes often mark
The fortunes of the great!

SOPHONISBA.

Phœniſſa, true;
'Tis awful all, the wonderous work of fate.
But ah! this ſudden marriage damps my ſoul;
I like it not, that wild precipitance
Of youth, that ardor, that impetuous ſtream
In which his love return'd. At firſt, my friend,
He vainly rag'd with diſappointed love;
And, as the haſty ſtorm ſubſided, then
To ſoftneſs varied, to returning fondneſs,
To ſighs, to tears, to ſupplicating vows;
But all his vows were idle, till at laſt
He ſhook my heart by *Rome*. — To be his queen,
Could only ſave me from their horrid power.
And there is madneſs in that thought, enough
In that ſtrong thought alone to make me run
From nature.

PHOE-

PHOENISSA.

Was it not auſpicious, madam?
Juſt as we hop'd? juſt as our wiſhes plan'd?
Nor let your ſpirit ſink. Your ſerious hours,
When you behold the *Roman* ravage check'd,
From their enchantment *Maſiniſſa* freed,
And *Carthage* miſtreſs of the world again,
This marriage will approve: then will it riſe
In all its glory, virtuous, wiſe and great,
While happy nations, then deliver'd, join
Their loud acclaim. And, had the white occaſion
Neglected flown, where now had been your hopes?
Your liberty? your country? where your all?
Think well of this, think that, think every way,
And *Sophoniſba* cannot but exult
In what is done.

SOPHONISBA.

So may my hopes ſucceed!
As love alone to *Carthage*, to the public,
Led me a marriage-victim to the temple,
And juſtifies my vows. — Ha! *Syphax* here!
What would his rage with me? — *Phœniſſa*, ſtay.
But this one tryal more — Heroic truth,
Support me now!

SCENE II.

SYPHAX, SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

SYPHAX.

You ſeem to fly me, madam,
To ſhun my gratulations. — Here I come,
To join the general joy; and I, ſure I,
Who have to dotage, have to ruin lov'd you,
Muſt take a tender part in your ſucceſs,
In your recover'd ſtate.

SOPHONISBA.

'Tis very well.
I thank you, ſir.

SYPHAX.

And gentle *Maſiniſſa*,
Say, will he prove a very coming fool?
All pliant, all devoted to your will?
A glorious wretch like *Syphax?* — Ha! not mov'd!
Speak, thou perfidious! canſt thou bear it thus?
With ſuch a ſteady countenance? canſt thou
Here ſee the man thou haſt ſo groſly wrong'd,
And yet not ſink in ſhame? And yet not ſhake
In every guilty nerve?

SOPHONISBA.

What have I done,
That I ſhould tremble? that I ſhould not dare
To bear thy preſence? Was my heart to blame,
I'd tremble for my ſelf, and not for thee,
Proud man! Nor would I live to be aſham'd.
My ſoul it ſelf would die, could the leaſt ſhame
On her unſpotted fame be juſtly caſt:
For of all evils, to the generous, ſhame
Is the laſt deadly pang. — But you behold
My late engagement with a jealous, falſe,
And ſelfiſh eye.

SYPHAX.

Avenging *Juno*, hear!
And canſt thou think to juſtify thy ſelf?
I bluſh to hear thee, traitreſs!

SOPHONISBA.

O my ſoul!
Canſt thou hear this, this baſe opprobrious language,
And yet be tamely calm? — Well, well, for once
It ſhall be ſo — in pity to thy madneſs —
Impatient ſpirit down! — Yes, *Syphax*, yes,
Yes I will greatly juſtify my ſelf;
Even by the conſort of the thundering *Jove*,
Who binds the holy marriage-vow, be judg'd.
And every public heart, not meanly loſt
In little low purſuits, to wretched ſelf

Not

Not all devoted, will abſolve me too.
But in the tempeſt of the ſoul, when rage,
Loud indignation, unattending pride,
And jealouſy confound it, how can then
The nobler paſſions, how can they be heard?
Yet let me tell thee —

SYPHAX.

Thou canſt tell me nought.
Away! away! nought but illuſion, falſhood —

SOPHONISBA.

My heart will burſt, in honour to my ſelf,
If here I ſpeak not; tho' thy rage, I know,
Can never be convinc'd, yet ſhall it be
Confounded. — And muſt I renounce my freedom?
Forgoe the power of doing general good?
Muſt yield my ſelf the ſlave, the barbarous triumph
Of inſolent, enrag'd, inveterate *Rome?*
And all for nothing but to grace thy fall?
Nay by my ſelf to periſh for thy pleaſure?
For thee, the *Romans* may be mild to thee;
But I, a *Carthaginian*, I, whoſe blood
Holds unrelenting enmity to theirs;
Who have my ſelf much hurt them, and who live
Alone to work them woe; what, what can I
Hope from their vengeance, but the very dregs
Of the worſt fate, the bitterneſs of bondage?
Yet thou, thou kind man, wouldſt in thy generous love,
Wouldſt have me ſuffer that; be bound to thee,
For that dire end alone, beyond the ſtretch
Of nature, and of law.

SYPHAX.

Confuſion! Law!
I know the laws permit thee, the groſs laws
That rule the vulgar. I'm a captive, true;
And therefore may'ſt thou plead a ſhameful right
To leave me to my chains — But ſay, thou baſe one!
Ungrateful! ſay, for whom am I a captive?
For whom theſe many years with war, and death,
Defeats, and deſolation have I liv'd?
For whom has battle after battle bled?

For

For whom my crown, my kingdom, and my all,
Been vilely caſt away? For whom this day,
This very day, have I been ſtain'd with ſlaughter?
With yon laſt reeking field? — For one, ye gods!
Who leaves me for the victor, for the wretch
I hold in utter endleſs deteſtation.
Fire! fury! hell! — Oh I am richly paid! —
But thus it is to love a woman — Woman!
The ſource of all diſaſter, all perdition!
Man in himſelf is ſocial, would be happy,
Too happy; but the gods, to keep him down,
Curs'd him with woman! fond, enchanting, ſmooth,
And harmleſs-ſeeming woman; while at heart
All poiſon, ſerpents, tygers, furies, all
That is deſtructive, in one form combin'd,
And gilded o'er with beauty!

SOPHONISBA.

Hapleſs man!
I pity thee; this madneſs only ſtirs
My boſom to compaſſion, not to rage.
Think as you liſt of our unhappy ſex,
Too much ſubjected to your tyrant force;
Yet know that all, we were not all, at leaſt,
Form'd for your trifles, for your wanton hours.
Our paſſions too can ſometimes ſoar above
The houſhold taſk aſſign'd us, can expand
Beyond the narrow ſphere of families,
And take in ſtates into the panting heart,
As well as yours, ye partial to yourſelves!
And this is my ſupport, my joy, my glory,
The Conſcience that my heart abhors all baſeneſs,
And of all baſeneſs moſt ingratitude.
This ſure affronted honour may declare,
With an unbluſhing cheek.

SYPHAX.

Falſe, falſe as Hell!
Falſe as your ſex! when it pretends to virtue.
You talk of honour, conſcience, patriotiſm.
A female patriot! — Vanity! — Abſurd!
Even doating dull credulity would laugh

To ſcorn your talk. Was ever Woman yet
Had any better purpoſe in her eye,
Than how to pleaſe her pride or wanton will?
In various ſhapes, and various manners, all,
All the ſame plagues, or open, or conceal'd,
The bane of life!

SOPHONISBA.

Muſt I then, muſt I, *Syphax*,
Give thee a bitter proof of what I ſay?
I would not ſeem to heighten thy diſtreſs,
Not in the leaſt inſult thee; thou art fallen,
So fate ſevere has will'd it, fallen by me.
I therefore have been patient; from another,
Such language, ſuch indignity, had fir'd
My ſoul to madneſs. But ſince driven ſo far,
I muſt remind thy blind injurious rage
Of our unhappy Marriage. —

SYPHAX.

Horror! — Oh!
Blot it eternal night!

SOPHONISBA.

Allow me, *Syphax!*
Hear me but once! If what I here declare
Shines not with reaſon, and the cleareſt truth;
May I be baſe, deſpis'd, and dumb for ever!
I pray thee think, when unpropitious *Hymen*
Our hands united, how I ſtood engag'd.
I need not mention what full well thou know'ſt.
But pray recal, was I not flatter'd? young?
With blooming life elate, with the warm years
Of vanity? ſunk in a paſſion too,
Which few reſign? Yet then I married thee,
Becauſe to *Carthage* deem'd a ſtronger friend;
For that alone. On theſe conditions, ſay,
Didſt thou not take me, court me to thy throne?
Have I deceiv'd thee ſince? Have I diſſembled?
To gain one purpoſe, e'er pretended what
I never felt? Thou canſt not ſay I have.
And if that principle, which then inſpir'd
My marrying thee, was right, it cannot now

Be

Be wrong. Nay ſince my native city wants
Aſſiſtance more, and ſinking calls for aid,
Muſt be more right—

SYPHAX.

This reaſoning is inſult!

SOPHONISBA.

I'm ſorry that thou doſt oblige me to it.
Then in a word take my full-open'd ſoul.
All love, but that of *Carthage*, I deſpiſe.
I formerly to *Maſiniſſa* thee
Preferr'd not, nor to thee now *Maſiniſſa*,
But *Carthage* to you both. And if preferring
Thouſands to one, a whole collected people,
All nature's tenderneſs, whate'er is ſacred,
The liberty the welfare of a ſtate,
To one man's frantic happineſs, be ſhame;
Here, *Syphax*, I invoke it on my head!
This ſet aſide; I, careleſs of my ſelf,
And, ſcorning proſperous ſtate, had ſtill been thine,
In all the depth of miſery proudly thine!
But ſince the public good, the law ſupreme,
Forbids it; I will leave thee with a kingdom,
The ſame I found thee, or not reign my ſelf.
Alas! I ſee thee hurt — Why cam'ſt thou here,
Thus to inflame thee more?

SYPHAX.

Why ſorcereſs? why?
Thou complication of all deadly miſchief!
Thou lying, ſoothing, ſpecious, charming fury!
I'll tell thee why — To breathe my great revenge;
To throw this load of burning madneſs from me;
To ſtab thee! —

SOPHONISBA.

Ha! —

SYPHAX.

— And, ſpringing from thy heart,
To quench me with thy blood!

(Phœniſſa interpoſes)

SOPHO-

SOPHONISBA.

Off, give me way!
Phœniſſa; tempt not thou his brutal rage.
Me, me, he dares not murder: if he dares,
Here let his fury ſtrike; for I dare die.
What holds thy trembling point?

PHOENISSA.

Guards!

SOPHONISBA.

Seize the king.
But look you treat him well, with all the ſtate
His dignity demands.

SYPHAX.

Goodneſs from thee
Is the worſt death, — The *Roman* trumpets! — Ha!
Now I bethink me, *Rome* will do me juſtice.
Yes, I ſhall ſee thee walk the ſlave of *Rome*;
Forget my wrongs, and glut me with the ſight.
Be that my beſt revenge.

SOPHONISBA.

Inhuman! that,
If there is death in *Afric*, ſhall not be.

SCENE III.

LÆLIUS, SYPHAX.

LÆLIUS.

Syphax! alas, how fallen! how chang'd! from what
I here beheld thee once in pomp, and ſplendor,
At that illuſtrious interview, when *Rome*
And *Carthage* met beneath this very roof,
Their too great generals, *Aſdrubal* and *Scipio*,
To court thy friendſhip. Of the ſame repaſt
Both gracefully partook, and both reclin'd

On the ſame couch: for perſonal diſtaſte
And hatred ſeldom burn between the brave.
Then the ſuperiour virtues of the *Roman*
Gain'd all thy heart. Even *Aſdrubal* himſelf,
With admiration ſtruck and juſt deſpair,
Own'd him as dreadful at the ſocial feaſt
As in the battle. This thou may'ſt remember;
And how thy faith was given before the Gods,
And ſworn and ſeal'd to *Scipio*; yet how falſe
Thou ſince has prov'd, I need not now recount:
But let thy ſufferings for thy guilt attone,
The captive for the king. A *Roman* tongue
Scorns to purſue the triumph of the ſword,
With mean upbraidings.

SYPHAX.

Lælius, 'tis too true.
Curſe on the cauſe!

LÆLIUS.

But where is *Maſiniſſa?*
The brave young victor, the *Numidian Roman!*
Where is he? that my joy, my glad applauſe,
From envy pure, may hail his happy ſtate.
Why that contemptuous ſmile?

SYPHAX.

Too credulous *Roman*,
I ſmile to think how that this *Maſiniſſa*,
This *Rome*-devoted heroe, muſt ſtill more
Attract thy praiſes by a late exploit.
In every thing ſucceſsful.

LÆLIUS.

What is this?
Theſe public ſhouts? A ſtrange unuſual joy
O'er all the captive city blazes wide.
What wanton riot reigns to night in *Cirtha?*
Within theſe conquer'd walls?

SYPHAX.

This, *Lælius*, is
A night of triumph o'er my conqueror,
O'er *Maſiniſſa*.

LÆLIUS.

Maſiniſſa! How?

SYPHAX.

Why he to night is married to my queen.

LÆLIUS.

Impoſſible! —

SYPHAX.

Yes, ſhe, the fury! ſhe,
Who put the nuptial torch into my hand,
That ſet my throne, my palace, and my kingdom,
All in a blaze — ſhe now has ſeiz'd on him.
Will turn him ſoon from *Rome* — I know her power,
Her lips diſtil unconquerable poiſon.
O glorious thought! — will ſink this hated youth,
Will cruſh him deep, beneath the mighty ruins
Of falling *Carthage*.

LÆLIUS.

Can it be? Amazement!

SYPHAX.

Nay learn it from himſelf. — He comes — Away!
Ye furies ſnatch me from his ſight! For hell,
Its tortures all are gentle to the preſence
Of a triumphant rival?

LÆLIUS.

What is man?

SCENE IV.

MASINISSA, LÆLIUS.

MASINISSA.

Thou more than partner of this glorious day!
Which has from *Carthage* torn her chief ſupport,
And tottering left her, I rejoice to ſee thee —
To *Cirtha* welcome, *Lælius*. — Thy brave legions
Now taſte the ſweet repoſe by valour purchas'd;

This city pours refreſhment on their toils.
I order'd *Narva* —

LÆLIUS.

Thanks to *Maſiniſſa.*
All that is well. I here obſerv'd the king,
But looſely guarded. True, indeed, from him
There is not much to fear. The dangerous ſpirit,
Still not unworthy fear, our matchleſs prize,
Is his imperious queen, is *Sophoniſba.*
The pride, the rage of *Carthage* live in her.
How? where is ſhe?

MASINISSA.

She, *Lælius?* In my care.
Think not of her. I'll anſwer for her conduct.

LÆLIUS.

Yes, if in chains. Till then, believe me, prince,
It were as hopeful anſwering for the winds,
That their broad pinions will not rouze the deſart;
Or that the darted lightning will be harmleſs;
As promiſe peace from her. — But why ſo dark?
You ſhift your place, your countenance grows warm.
It is not uſual this in *Maſiniſſa.*
Pray what offence can aſking for the queen,
The *Roman* captive give?

MASINISSA.

Lælius, no more.
You know my marriage. — *Syphax* has been buſy —
It is unkind to dally with my paſſion.

LÆLIUS.

Ah, *Maſiniſſa!* was it then for this,
Thy hurry hither from the recent battle?
Is the firſt inſtance of the *Roman* bounty
Thus, thus abus'd? They give thee back thy kingdom;
And in return are of their captive robb'd;
Of all they valued, *Sophoniſba.* —

MASINISSA.

Robb'd!
How, *Lælius?* Robb'd!

LÆLIUS.

LÆLIUS.

Yes, *Maſiniſſa*, robb'd.
What is it elſe? But I, this very night,
Will here aſſert the majeſty of *Rome*;
And, mark me, tear her from the nuptial bed.

MASINISSA.

Oh Gods! oh patience! As ſoon, fiery *Roman!*
As ſoon thy rage might from her azure ſphere
Tear yonder moon. — The man who ſeizes her,
Shall ſet his foot firſt on my bleeding heart.
Of that be ſure. — And is it thus ye treat
Your firm allies? Thus kings in friendſhip with you?
Of human paſſions ſtrip them? — Slaves indeed!
If thus deny'd the common privilege
Of nature, what the weakeſt creatures claim,
A right to what they love.

LÆLIUS.

Out! out! — For ſhame!
This paſſion makes thee blind. Here is a war,
Which deſolates the nations, has almoſt
Laid waſte the world. How many widows, orphans,
And love-lorn virgins pine for it in *Rome!*
Even her great ſenate droops; her nobles fail;
Her *Circus* ſhrinks; her every *luſtre* thins,
Nature her ſelf, by frequent prodigies,
Seems at this havock of her works to ſicken:
And our *Auſonian* plains are now become
A horror to the ſight: At each ſad ſtep,
Remembrance weeps. Yet her, the greateſt prize
It hitherto has yielded; her, whoſe charms
Are only turn'd to whet its cruel point;
Thou to thy wedded breaſt haſt taken her:
Haſt purchas'd thee her beauties by a ſea
Of thy protector's blood; and on a throne
Set her, this day recover'd by their arms.
Canſt thou thy ſelf, thou, think of it with patience?
Nor to a *Roman* mention King. — A *Roman*
Would ſcorn to be a king. — The *Roman* people
Took liberty from out the very duſt,
And for great ages urg'd it to the ſkies,

The

The dread of kings!

MASINISSA.

Be not ſo haughty, *Lælius.*
It ſcarce becomes the gentle *Scipio*'s friend;
Suits not thy wonted eaſe, the tender manners
I ſtill have mark'd in thee. I honour *Rome*;
But honour too my ſelf, my vows, my queen:
Nor will, nor can, I tamely hear thee threaten
To ſeize her like a ſlave.

LÆLIUS.

I will be calm.
This thy raſh deed, this unexpected ſhock,
Such a peculiar injury to me,
Thy friend and fellow-ſoldier, has perhaps
Snatch'd me too far. For haſt thou not diſhonour'd,
By this laſt action, a ſucceſsful war?
Our common charge, entruſted us by *Scipio.*

MASINISSA.

Ay, there it is. — Has not thy vain ambition,
(Oh where is friendſhip!) plan'd her for thy triumph?
To think on't, death! to think it is diſhonour.
At ſuch a ſight, the warriour's eye might wet
His burning cheek; and all the *Roman* matrons,
Who line the laurel'd way, aſham'd, and ſad,
Turn from a captive brighter than themſelves.
But *Scipio* will be milder.

LÆLIUS.

I diſdain
This thy ſurmiſe, and give it up to *Scipio.*
Thoſe paſſions are not comely. — Here to morrow
Comes the proconſul. Mean time, *Maſiniſſa,*
Ah harden not thy ſelf in flattering hope!
Scipio is mild, but ſteady. — Ha! the queen.
I think ſhe hates a *Roman.* — and will leave thee.

SCENE V.

SOPHONISBA, MASINISSA.

SOPHONISBA.

Was not that *Roman Lælius*, as I enter'd,
Who parted gloomy hence?

MASINISSA.

Madam, the ſame.

SOPHONISBA.

Unhappy *Afric!* ſince theſe haughty *Romans*
Have in this lordly manner trod thy courts.
I read his freſh reproaches in thy face;
The leſſon'd pupil in thy fallen look,
In that forc'd ſmile which ſickens on thy cheek.

MASINISSA.

Oh ſay not ſo, thou rapture of my ſoul!
For while I ſee thee, meditate thy charms,
I ſmile as cordial as the ſun in May;
Deep from the heart, in every ſenſe of joy
I fondly ſmile.

SOPHONISBA.

Nay, tell me, *Maſiniſſa*;
How feels their tyranny, when 'tis brought home?
When, lawleſs grown, it touches what is dear?
Pomp for a while may dazle thoughtleſs man,
Falſe glory blind him; but there is a time,
When ev'n the ſlave in heart will ſpurn his chains,
Nor know ſubmiſſion more. — What ſaid his pride?

MASINISSA.

His diſappointment for a moment only
Burſt in vain paſſion, and —

SOPHONISBA.

You ſtood abaſh'd;

You

You bore his threats, and tamely-ſilent heard him,
Heard the fierce *Roman* mark me for his triumph.
Oh bitter!

MASINISSA.

Baniſh that unkind ſuſpicion.
The thought enſlam'd my ſoul. I vow'd my life,
My laſt *Maſſylian* to the ſword, ere he
Shou'd touch thy freedom with the leaſt diſhonour.
But that from *Scipio* —

SOPHONISBA.

Scipio!

MASINISSA.

That from him —

SOPHONISBA.

I tell thee, *Maſiniſſa*, if from him
I gain my freedom, from my ſelf conceal it.
I ſhall diſdain ſuch freedom.

MASINISSA.

Sophoniſba!
Thou all my heart holds precious! doubt no more.
Nor *Rome*, nor *Scipio*, nor a world combin'd
Shall tear thee from me; till outſtretch'd I lie,
A nameleſs wretch!

SOPHONISBA.

If thy protection fails,
Of this at leaſt be ſure, be very ſure,
To give me timely death.

MASINISSA.

Ceaſe thus to talk,
Of death of *Romans*, of unkind ambition.
My ſofter thoughts thoſe rugged themes refuſe,
Can turn alone to love. — All, all, but thee,
All nature is a paſſing dream to me.
Fix'd in my view, thou doſt for ever ſhine,
Thy form forth-beaming from the ſoul divine.
A ſpirit thine, which mortals might adore;
Deſpiſing love, and thence creating more.
Thou the high paſſions, I the tender prove,
Thy heart was form'd for glory, mine for love.

The End of the Fourth Act.

ACT

ACT V. SCENE I.

MASINISSA, NARVA.

MASINISSA.

HAil to the joyous day! With purple clouds,
The whole horizon glows. The breezy *Spring*
Stands looſely-floating on the mountain-top,
And deals her ſweets around. The ſun too ſeems,
As conſcious of my joy, with brighter eye
To look abroad the world; and all things ſmile
Like *Sophoniſba*. Love and friendſhip ſure
Have mark'd this day from out their choiceſt ſtores;
For beauty rais'd by dignity and virtue,
With all the graces all the loves embelliſh'd;
Oh *Sophoniſba*'s mine! and *Scipio* comes!

NARVA.

My lord, the trumpets ſpeak his near approach.

MASINISSA.

I want his ſecret audience — Leave us, *Narva*.

SCENE II.

SCIPIO, MASINISSA.

MASINISSA.

Scipio! more welcome than my tongue can ſpeak!
Oh greatly, dearly welcome!

SCIPIO.

Maſiniſſa!
My heart beats back thy joy. — A happy friend,

With laurel green, with conqueſt crown'd, and glory;
Rais'd by his prudence, fortitude, and valour,
O'er all his foes; and on his native throne,
Amidſt his reſcu'd ſhouting ſubjects, ſet:
Say, can the gods in laviſh bounty give
A ſight more pleaſing?

MASINISSA.

My great friend! and patron!
It was thy timely, thy reſtoring arm,
That brought me from the fearful deſart-life;
To live again in ſtate, and purple ſplendor.
And now I wield the ſceptre of my fathers,
See my dear people from the tyrant's ſcourge,
From *Syphax* freed; I hear their glad applauſes;
And, to compleat my happineſs, have gain'd
A friend worth all. O gratitude, eſteem,
And love like mine, with what divine delight
Ye fill the heart!

SCIPIO.

Heroic youth! thy virtue
Has earn'd whate'er thy fortune can beſtow.
It was thy patience, *Maſiniſſa*, patience,
A champion clad in ſteel, that in the waſte
Attended ſtill thy ſtep, and ſav'd my friend
For better days. What cannot patience do?
A great deſign is ſeldom ſnatch'd at once;
'Tis patience heaves it on. From ſavage nature,
'Tis patience that has built up human life,
The nurſe of arts! and *Rome* exalts her head
An everlaſting monument of patience.

MASINISSA.

If I have that, or any virtue, *Scipio*,
'Tis copy'd all from thee.

SCIPIO.

No *Maſiniſſa*,
'Tis all unborrow'd, the ſpontaneous growth
Of nature in thy breaſt. — Friendſhip for once
Muſt, tho' thou bluſheſt, wear a liberal tongue;
Muſt tell thee, noble youth, that long experience,

In

In councils, battles, many a hard event,
Has found thee ſtill ſo conſtant, ſo ſincere,
So wiſe, ſo brave, ſo generous, ſo humane,
So well attemper'd, and ſo fitly turn'd
For what is either great or good in life,
As caſts diſtinguiſh'd honour on thy country;
And cannot but endear thee to the *Romans*.
For me, I think my labours all repaid,
My wars in *Afric*. *Maſiniſſa*'s friendſhip
Smiles at my ſoul. Be that my deareſt triumph,
To have aſſiſted thy forlorn eſtate,
And lent a happy hand in raiſing thee
To thy paternal throne, uſurp'd by *Syphax*.
The greateſt ſervice could be done my country,
Diſtracted *Afric*, and Mankind in general,
Was aiding ſure thy cauſe. To put the power,
The public power, into the good man's hand,
Is giving plenty, life, and joy to millions.
But has my friend, ſince late we parted armies;
Since he with *Lælius* acted ſuch a brave,
Auſpicious part againſt the common foe;
Has he been blameleſs quite? has he conſider'd,
How pleaſure often on the youthful heart,
Beneath the roſy ſoft diſguiſe of love;
(All ſweetneſs, ſmiles, and ſeeming innocence)
Steals unperceiv'd, and lays the victor low?
I would not, cannot, put thee to the pain —
— It pains me deeper — of the leaſt reproach. —
Let thy too faithful memory ſupply
The reſt. (*Pauſing*)
Thy ſilence, that dejected look,
That honeſt colour flushing o'er thy cheek,
Impart thy better ſoul.

MASINISSA.

Oh my good lord!
Oh *Scipio!* Love has ſeiz'd me, tyrant love
Inthralls my ſoul. I am undone by love!

SCIPIO.

And art thou then to ruin reconcil'd?
Tam'd to deſtruction? Wilt thou be undone?

Reſign the towering thought? the vaſt deſign,
With future glories big? the warriour's wreathe?
The glittering files? the trumpets ſprightly clang?
The praiſe of ſenates? an applauding world?
The patriot's ſtatue, and the heroes triumph?
All for a ſigh? all for a ſoft embrace?
For a gay tranſient fancy, *Maſiniſſa?*
For ſhame, my friend! for honour's ſake, for glory!
Sit not with folded arms, deſpairing, weak,
And careleſs all, till certain ruin comes:
Like a ſick virgin ſighing to the gale,
Unconquerable love!

MASINISSA.

How chang'd indeed!
The time has been, when, fir'd from *Scipio*'s tongue,
My ſoul had mounted in a flame with his. —
Where is ambition flown? Hopeleſs attempt!
Can love like mine be quell'd? Can I forget
What ſtill poſſeſſes, charms my thoughts for ever
Throw ſcornful from me what I hold moſt dear?
Not feel the force of excellence? To joy
Be dead? And undelighted with delight?
Soft, let me think a moment — no! no! no! —
I am unequal to thy virtue, *Scipio!*

SCIPIO.

Fie, *Maſiniſſa*, fie! By heavens! I bluſh
At thy dejection, this degenerate language.
What! periſh for a woman! Ruin all,
All the fair deeds which an admiring world
Hopes from thy riſing day; only to ſooth
A ſtubborn fancy, a luxurious will?
How muſt it, think you, ſound in future ſtory?
Young *Maſiniſſa* was a virtuous prince,
And *Afric* ſmil'd beneath his early ray;
But that a *Carthaginian* captive came,
By whom untimely in the common fate
Of love he fell. The wiſe will ſcorn the page.
And all thy praiſe be ſome fond maid exclaiming,
Where are thoſe lovers now? — O rather, rather,
Had I ne'er ſeen the vital light of heaven,

Than

Than like the vulgar live, and like them die!
Ambition ſickens at the very thought. —
To puff, and buſtle here from day to day,
Loſt in the paſſions of inglorious life,
Joys which the careleſs brutes poſſeſs above us.
And when ſome years, each duller than another,
Are thus elaps'd, in nauſeous pangs to die;
And paſs away, like thoſe forgotten things,
That ſoon become as they had never been.

MASINISSA.

And am I dead to this?

SCIPIO.

The gods, young man,
Who train up heroes in misfortune's ſchool,
Have ſhook thee with adverſity, with each
Illuſtrious evil, that can raiſe, expand,
And fortify the mind. Thy rooted worth
Has ſtood theſe wintry blaſts, grown ſtronger by them.
Shall then in proſperous times, while all is mild,
All vernal, fair; and glory blows around thee;
Shall then the *dead Serene* of pleaſure come,
And lay thy faded honours in the duſt?

MASINISSA.

O gentle *Scipio!* ſpare me, ſpare my weakneſs.

SCIPIO.

Remember *Hannibal* — A ſignal proof,
A freſh example of deſtructive pleaſure.
He was the dread of nations, once of *Rome!*
When from *Bellona*'s boſom, nurs'd in camps,
And hard with toil, he down the rugged *Alps*
Ruſh'd in a torrent over *Italy*;
Unconquer'd, till the looſe delights of *Capua*
Sunk his victorious arm, his genius broke,
Perfum'd, and made a lover of the heroe.
And now he droops in *Bruttium*, fear'd no more,
Sinks on our borders like a ſcatter'd ſtorm.
Remember him; and yet reſume thy ſpirit,
Ere it is quite diſſolv'd.

MASINISSA.

Shall *Scipio* ſtoop,
Thus to regard, to teach me wiſdom thus;
And yet a ſtupid anguiſh at my heart
Repel whate'er he ſays? — But why, my lord,
Why ſhould we kill the beſt of paſſions, love?
It aids the heroe, bids ambition riſe,
Turns us to pleaſe, inſpires immortal deeds,
Even ſoftens brutes, and makes the good more good.

SCIPIO.

There is a holy tenderneſs indeed,
A nameleſs ſympathy, a fountain-love;
Branch'd infinite from parents to their children,
From child to child, from kindred on to kindred,
In various ſtreams, from citizen to citizen,
From friend to friend, from man to man in general;
That binds, ſupports, and ſweetens human life.
But is thy paſſion ſuch? — Liſt, *Maſiniſſa*,
While I the hardeſt office of a friend
Diſcharge; and, with a neceſſary hand,
A hand tho' harſh at preſent really tender,
I paint this paſſion. And if then thou ſtill
Art bent to ſooth it, I muſt ſighing leave thee,
To what the Gods think fit.

MASINISSA.

O never, *Scipio!*
O never leave me to my ſelf! Speak on.
I dread, and yet deſire thy friendly hand.

SCIPIO.

I hope that *Maſiniſſa* need not now
Be told, how much his happineſs is mine;
With what a warm benevolence I'd ſpring
To raiſe, confirm it, to prevent his wiſhes.
O luxury to think! — But while he rages,
Burns in a fever, ſhall I let him quaff
Delicious poiſon for a cooling draught,
In fooliſh pity to his thirſt? ſhall I
Let a ſwift flame conſume him as he ſleeps,
Becauſe his dreams are gay? ſhall I indulge
A frenzy flaſh'd from an infectious eye?

A ſud-

A ſudden impulſe unapprov'd by reaſon?
Nay by thy cool deliberate thought condemn'd?
Reſolv'd againſt? — A paſſion for a woman,
Who has abus'd thee baſely? left thy youth,
Thy love as ſweet, as tender as the ſpring,
The blooming heroe for the hoary tyrant?
And now who makes thy ſheltering arms alone
Her laſt retreat, to ſave her from the vengeance,
Which even her very perfidy to thee
Has brought upon her head? — Nor is this all. —
A woman who will ply her deepeſt arts,
(Ah too prevailing, as appears already)
Will never reſt, till *Syphax*' fate is thine;
Till friendſhip weeping flies; we join no more
In glorious deeds, and thou fall off from *Rome*?
I too could add, that there is ſomething mean,
Inhuman in thy paſſion. Does not *Syphax*,
While thou rejoiceſt, die? The generous heart
Should ſcorn a pleaſure which gives others pain.
If this, my friend, all this conſider'd deep,
Allarm thee not, not rouze thy reſolution,
And call the heroe from his wanton ſlumber,
Then *Maſiniſſa*'s loſt.

MASINISSA.

Oh, I am pierc'd!
In every thought am pierc'd! 'Tis all too true. —
I wiſh I could refuſe it. — Whither, whither,
Thro' what inchanted wilds have I been wandering?
They ſeem'd *Elyſium*, the delightful plains,
The happy groves of heroes and of lovers:
But the divinity that breathes in thee
Has broke the charm, and I am in a deſart;
Far from the land of peace. It was but lately
That a pure joyous calm o'erſpread my ſoul,
And reaſon tun'd my paſſions into bliſs;
When love came hurrying in, and with raſh hand,
Mix'd them delirious, till they now ferment
To miſery. — There is no reaſoning down
This deep, deep anguiſh! this continual pang!
A thouſand things! whene'er my raptur'd thought

Runs

Runs back a little. — But I will not think. —
And yet I muſt — Oh Gods! that I could loſe
What a fond few hours memory has grav'd
On adamant.

SCIPIO.

But one ſtrong effort more,
And the fair field is thine — A conqueſt far
Excelling that o'er *Syphax*. What remains,
Since now thy madneſs to thy ſelf appears,
But an immediate manly reſolution,
To ſhake off this effeminate diſeaſe;
Theſe ſoft ideas, which ſeduce thy ſoul,
Make it all idle, unaſpiring, weak,
A ſcene of dreams; to puff them to the winds,
And be my former friend, thy ſelf again?
I joy to find thee touch'd by generous motives;
And that I need not bid thee recollect,
Whoſe awful property thou haſt uſurp'd;
Need not aſſure thee, that the *Roman* people,
The ſenators of *Rome*, will never ſuffer
A dangerous woman, their devoted foe,
A woman, whoſe irrefragable ſpirit
Has in great part ſuſtain'd this bloody war,
Whoſe charms corrupted *Syphax* from their ſide,
And fir'd embattled nations into rage;
Will never ſuffer her, when gain'd ſo dear,
To ruin thee too, taint thy faithful breaſt,
And kindle future war. No, fate it ſelf
Is not more ſteady to the right than they.
And, where the public good but ſeems concern'd,
No motive their impenetrable hearts,
Nor fear nor tenderneſs, can touch: ſuch is
The ſpirit, that has rais'd *Imperial Rome*.

MASINISSA.

Ah killing truth! — But I have promis'd, *Scipio!*
Have ſworn to ſave her from the *Roman* power.
My plighted faith is paſs'd, my hand is given.
And, by the conſcious gods! who mark'd my vows,
The whole united world ſhall never have her.
For I will die a thouſand thouſand deaths,

With

With all *Maſſylia* in one field expire;
Ere to the loweſt wretch, much more to her
I love, to *Sophoniſba*, to my queen,
I violate my word.

SCIPIO.

My heart approves
Thy reſolution, thy determin'd honour.
For ever ſacred be thy word, and oath.
Virtue by virtue will alone be clear'd,
And ſcorns the crooked methods of diſhonour.
But, thus divided, how to keep thy faith
At once to *Rome* and *Sophoniſba*; how
To ſave her from our chains, and yet thyſelf
From greater bondage; this thy ſecret thought
Can beſt inform thee.

MASINISSA.

Agony! Diſtraction!
Theſe wilful tears! — O look not on me, *Scipio!*
For I'm a child again.

SCIPIO.

Thy tears are no reproach.
Tears oft look graceful on the manly cheek.
The Cruel cannot weep. Even Friendſhip's eye
Gives thee the drop it would refuſe itſelf.
I know 'tis hard, wounds every bleeding nerve
About thy heart, thus to tear off thy paſſion.
But for that very reaſon, *Maſiniſſa*,
'Tis hop'd from thee. The harder, thence reſults
The greater glory. — Why ſhould we pretend
To conquer, rule mankind, be firſt in power,
In great aſſemblies, honour, place, and pleaſure,
While ſlaves at heart? while by fantaſtick turns
Our frantic paſſions rage? The very thought
Should turn our pomp to ſhame, our ſweet to bitter;
And, when the ſhouts of millions meet our ears,
Whiſper reproach. — O ye celeſtial powers!
What is it, in a torrent of ſucceſs,
To bear down nations, and o'erflow the world?
All your peculiar favour. Real glory
Springs from the ſilent conqueſt of ourſelves;

And without that the conqueror is nought
Save the firſt ſlave. — Then rouze thee, *Maſiniſſa!*
Nor in one weakneſs all thy virtues loſe;
And oh beware of long, of vain repentance!

MASINISSA.

Well! well! no more. — It is but dying too!

SCENE III.

SCIPIO *alone.*

I wiſh I have not urg'd the truth to rigour!
There is a time when virtue grows ſevere,
Too much for nature, and even almoſt cruel.

SCENE IV.

SCIPIO, LÆLIUS.

SCIPIO.

Poor *Maſiniſſa*, *Lælius*, is undone;
Betwixt his paſſion and his reaſon toſt
In miſerable conflict.

LÆLIUS.

Entering, *Scipio*,
He ſhot athwart me, nor vouchſaf'd one look.
Hung on his clouded brow I mark'd deſpair,
And his eye glaring with ſome dire reſolve.
Faſt o'er his cheek too ran the haſty tear.
It were great pity that he ſhould be loſt!

SCIPIO.

By heavens! to loſe him were a ſhock, as if
I loſt thee, *Lælius*, loſt my deareſt brother,

Bound

Bound up in friendſhip from our infant years.
A thouſand lovely qualities endear him,
Only too warm of heart.

LÆLIUS.

What ſhall be done?

SCIPIO.

Here let it reſt, till time abates his paſſion.
Nature is nature, *Lælius*, let the Wiſe
Say what they pleaſe. But now perhaps he dies. —
Haſte! haſte! and give him hope — I have not time
To tell thee what. — Thy prudence will direct —
Whatever is conſiſtent with my honour,
My duty to the publick, and my friendſhip
To him himſelf, ſay, promiſe, ſhall be done.
I hope returning reaſon will prevent
Our farther care.

LÆLIUS.

I fly with joy.

SCIPIO.

His life
Not only ſave, but *Sophoniſba*'s too:
For both I fear are in this paſſion mixt.

LÆLIUS.

It ſhall be done.

SCENE V.

SCIPIO *alone.*

If friendſhip pierces thus,
When love pours in his added violence,
What are the pangs which *Maſiniſſa* feels!

SCENE VI.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

SOPHONISBA.

Yes, *Maſiniſſa* loves me — Heavens! how fond!
But yet I know not what hangs on my ſpirit,
A diſmal boding; for this fatal *Scipio*,
I dread his virtues, this prevailing *Roman*,
Even now perhaps deludes the generous king,
Fires his ambition with miſtaken glory,
Demands me from him; for full well he knows,
That, while I live, I muſt intend their ruin.

PHOENISSA.

Madam, theſe fears —

SOPHONISBA.

And yet it cannot be.
Can *Scipio*, whom even hoſtile fame proclaims
Of perfect honour, and of poliſh'd manners,
Smooth, artful, winning, moderate, and wiſe,
Make ſuch a wild demand? Or, if he could,
Can *Maſiniſſa* grant it? give his queen,
Whom love and honour bind him to protect,
Yield her a captive to triumphant *Rome?*
'Tis baſeneſs to ſuſpect it; 'tis inhuman.
What then remains? — Suppoſe they ſhould reſolve
By right of war to ſeize me for their prize.
Ay, there it kills! — What can his ſingle arm,
Againſt the *Roman* power? that very power
By which he ſtands reſtor'd? Diſtracting thought!
Still o'er my head the rod of bondage hangs.
Shame on my weakneſs! — This poor catching hope,
This tranſient taſte of joy, will only more
Imbitter death.

PHOE-

PHOENISSA.

A moment will decide.
Madam, till then —

SOPHONISBA.

Would I had dy'd before!
And am I dreaming here? Here from the *Romans*,
Beſeeching I may live to ſwell their triumph?
When my free ſpirit ſhould ere now have join'd
That great aſſembly, thoſe devoted ſhades,
Who ſcorn'd to live till liberty was loſt,
But ere their country fell, abhorr'd the light.
Whence this pale ſlave? he trembles with his meſſage.

SCENE VII.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA; *and to them a* SLAVE, *with a letter and poiſon from* MASINISSA.

SLAVE *kneeling.*

This, Madam, from the King, and this.

SOPHONISBA.

Ha!—Stay.
(Reads the Letter.)
Rejoice, *Phœniſſa!* Give me joy, my friend!
For here is liberty! My fears are air!
The hand of *Rome* can never touch me more!
Hail! perfect freedom, hail!

PHOENISSA.

How? what? my queen!
Ah what is this?
(Pointing to the poiſon.)

SOPHONISBA.

The firſt of bleſſings, death.

PHOENISSA.

Alas! alas! can I rejoice in that?

SOPHO-

SOPHONISBA.

Shift not thy colour at the ſound of death;
For death appears not in a dreary light,
Seems not a blank to me; a loſing all
Thoſe fond ſenſations, thoſe enchanting dreams,
Which cheat a toiling world from day to day,
And form the whole of happineſs they know.
It is to me perfection, glory, triumph.
Nay fondly would I chuſe it, tho' perſuaded
It were a long dark night without a morning,
To bondage far prefer it! ſince it is
Deliverance from a world where *Romans* rule,
Where violence prevails — And timely too —
Before my country falls; before I feel
As many ſtripes, as many chains, and deaths,
As there are lives in *Carthage*. — Glorious charter!
By which I hold immortal life and freedom,
Come, let me read thee once again. — And then,
To thy great purpoſe.

(Reads the letter aloud.)

MASINISSA to his QUEEN.

The Gods know with what pleaſure I would have kept my faith to Sophoniſba *in another manner. But ſince this fatal bowl can alone deliver thee from the* Romans: *call to mind thy father, thy country, that thou haſt been the wife of two kings; and act up to the dictates of thy own heart. I will not long ſurvive thee.*

Oh, 'tis wondrous well!
Ye Gods of death! who rule the *Stygian* gloom,
Ye who have greatly dy'd! I come! I come!
I die contented, ſince I die a queen;
By *Rome* untouch'd, unſullied by their power;
So much their terror that I muſt not live.
And thou, go tell the king, if this is all
The nuptial preſent he can ſend his bride,
I thank him for it — But that death had worn

An

An eaſier face before I truſted him.
His poiſon, tell him too, he might have ſpar'd,
Theſe times may want it for himſelf; and I
Live not of ſuch a cordial unprovided.
Add, hither had he come, I could have taught
Him how to die. — I linger not, remember,
I ſtand not ſhivering on the brink of life;
And, but theſe votive drops, which grateful thus
(Taking them from the poiſon)
To *Jove* the high *Deliverer* I ſhed,
Aſſure him that I drank it, drank it all,
With an unalter'd ſmile ——— Away.
(Drinks.)

SCENE VIII.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

SOPHONISBA.

My friend!
In tears, my friend! Diſhonour not my death
With womaniſh complaints. Weep not for me,
Weep for thy ſelf, *Phœniſſa*, for thy country,
But not for me. There is a certain hour,
Which one would wiſh all undiſturb'd and bright,
No care, no ſorrow, no dejected paſſions,
And that is when we die; when hence we go,
Ne'er to be ſeen again; then let us ſpread
A bold exalted wing, and the laſt voice
We hear be that of wonder and applauſe.

PHOENISSA.

Who with the patriot wiſhes not to die!

SOPHONISBA.

And is the ſacred moment then ſo near?
The moment, when yon ſun, thoſe heavens, this earth

Hateful

Hateful to me, polluted by the *Romans*,
And all the buſy ſlaviſh race of men,
Shall ſink at once; and ſtrait another ſtate,
New ſcenes, new joys, new faculties, new wonders,
Riſe on a ſudden round: but this the gods
In clouds and horror wrap, or none would live!
How liberal is death! — Methinks, I ſeem
To touch the happy ſhore. — Behind me frowns
A ſtormy ſea, with toſſing mortals thick;
While, unconfin'd and green, before me lies
The land of bliſs, and everlaſting freedom:
Where walk the mighty dead; all of one mind,
One blooming ſmile, one language, and one country.
Oh to be there! — my breaſt begins to burn;
My tainted heart grows ſick. — Ah me! *Phœniſſa*,
How many virgins, infants, tender wretches,
Muſt feel theſe pangs, ere *Carthage* is no more!
Soft — lead me to my couch — My ſhivering Limbs,
Do this laſt office, and then reſt for ever.
I pray thee weep not, pierce me not with groans.
The king too here. — Nay then my death is full!

SCENE IX.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA, MASINISSA, LÆLIUS, NARVA.

MASINISSA.

Has *Sophoniſha* drank this curſed bowl?
Oh horror! horror! what a ſight is here!

SOPHONISBA.

Had I not drank it, *Maſiniſſa*, then,
I had deſerv'd it.

MASI-

MASINISSA.

Exquiſite diſtreſs!
Oh bitter, bitter fate! And this laſt hope
Compleats my woe.

SOPHONISBA.

When will theſe ears be deaf
To miſery's complaint? Theſe eyes be blind
To miſchief wrought by *Rome?*

MASINISSA.

Too ſoon! too ſoon! —
Ah why ſo haſty? But a little while,
Hadſt thou delay'd this horrid draught; I then
Had been as happy, as I now am wretched!

SOPHONISBA.

What means this talk of hope? of coward waiting?

MASINISSA.

What have I done? Oh heavens! I cannot think
Without diſtraction, hell, and burning anguiſh,
On my raſh deed! — But, while I talk, ſhe dies!
And how? what? where am I then? — Say, canſt thou
Forgive me, *Sophoniſba?*

SOPHONISBA.

Yes, and more,
More than forgive thee, thank thee, *Maſiniſſa.*
Hadſt thou been weak, and dally'd with my freedom,
Till by proud *Rome* enſlav'd; that injury
I never had forgiven.

MASINISSA.

I came with life!
Lælius and I from *Scipio* haſted hither;
But death was here before us — this vile poiſon!

SOPHONISBA.

With life! — There was ſome merit in the poiſon;
But this deſtroys it all. — And couldſt thou think
Me mean enough to take it? — Oh! *Phœniſſa,*
This mortal toil is almoſt at an end. —
Receive my parting ſoul.

PHOENISSA.

Alas, my queen!

MASINISSA.

Dies! dies! and ſcorns me! — Mercy! *Sophoniſba!*
Grant one forgiving look, while yet thou canſt;
Or death it ſelf, the grave cannot relieve me:
But, with the furies join'd, my frantic ghoſt
Will howl for ever. — Quivering! and pale!
Have I done this?

SOPHONISBA.

Come nearer, *Maſiniſſa.* —
Out! ſtubborn nature! —

MASINISSA.

Miſery! theſe pangs
To me transfer'd were eaſe. — A moment only!
An agonizing moment! while I have
An age of things to ſay!

SOPHONISBA.

We, but for *Rome*,
Might have been happy. — Rouze thee now, my ſoul!
The cold deliverer comes. — Be mild to *Syphax* —
In my ſurviving friend behold me ſtill —
Farewell! — 'Tis done! — O never, never, *Carthage*,
Shall I behold thee more!

(*Dies.*)

MASINISSA.

Dead! dead! oh dead!
Is there no death for me?

(*Snatches* Lælius's *ſword to ſtab himſelf.*)

LÆLIUS.

Hold, *Maſiniſſa!*

MASINISSA.

And wouldſt thou make a coward of me, *Lælius?*
Have me ſurvive that murder'd excellence?
Did ſhe not ſtir? Ha! Who has ſhock'd my brain!
It whirls, it blazes. — Was it thou, old man?

NARVA.

Alas! alas! — good *Maſiniſſa*, ſoftly!
Let me conduct thee to thy couch.

MASI-

MASINISSA.

The grave
Were welcome. — But ye cannot make me live!
Oppreſs'd with life! — Off! — crowd not thus a-
round me!
For I will hear, ſee, think no more! — Thou ſun,
Keep up thy hated beams! And all I want
Of thee, kind earth, is an immediate grave!
Ay, there ſhe lyes! — Why to that pallid ſweetneſs
Can not I, Nature! lay my lips, and die!
(Throws himſelf beſide her.)

LÆLIUS.

See there the ruins of the noble mind,
When from calm reaſon paſſion tears the ſway.
What pity ſhe ſhould periſh! — Cruel war,
'Tis not the leaſt misfortune in thy train,
That oft by thee the brave deſtroy the brave.
She had a *Roman* ſoul; for every one
Who loves, like her, his country is a *Roman.*
Whether on *Afric*'s ſandy plains he glows,
Or lives untam'd among *Riphæan* ſnows.
If parent-liberty the breaſt inflame,
The gloomy *Libyan* then deſerves that name:
And, warm with freedom, under frozen ſkies,
In fartheſt *Britain Romans* yet may riſe.

4 AP 54

The End of the Fifth Act.

EPILOGUE.

By a FRIEND.

Spoken by Mrs. *CIBBER.*

NOW, I'm afraid, the modeſt taſte in vogue
Demands a ſtrong, high-ſeaſon'd epilogue.
Elſe might ſome ſilly ſoul take pity's part,
And odious virtue ſink into the heart.

Our ſqueamiſh author ſcruples this proceeding;
He ſays it hurts ſound morals, and good breeding:
Nor Sophoniſba *would he here produce,*
A glaring model, of no private uſe.
Ladies, he bid me ſay, behold your Cato.
What tho' no Stoic *ſhe, nor read in* Plato?
Yet ſure ſhe offer'd, for her country's ſake,
A ſacrifice, which Cato *could not make —*
— Already, now, theſe wicked men are ſneering,
Some wreſting what one ſays, and others leering.
I vow they have not ſtrength for — public ſpirit.
That, ladies, muſt be your ſuperior merit.

Mercy forbid! we ſhould lay down our lives;
Like theſe old, Punic, *barbarous, heathen wives.*
Spare chriſtian *blood. — But ſure the devil's in her,*
Who for her country would not loſe a pinner.
— Lard! how could ſuch a creature ſhew her face?
How? — Juſt as you do there — thro' Bruſſels *Lace.*
The Roman *fair, the public in diſtreſs,*
Gave up the deareſt ornaments of dreſs.

How

EPILOGUE.

How much more cheaply might you gain applauſe?
— One yard of Ribban, *and two ells of* Gauſe.
And Gauſe *each deep-read critic muſt adore;*
Your Roman *ladies dreſs'd in* Gauſe *all o'er.*
Should you, fair patriots, come to dreſs ſo thin;
How clear might all your — ſentiments be ſeen.
To foreign looms no longer owe your charms;
Nor make their trade more fatal than their arms.
Each Britiſh *dame, who courts her country's praiſe,*
By quitting theſe outlandiſh *modes, might raiſe*
(Not from yon powder'd band, ſo thin, and ſpruce)
Ten able-bodied men, for — public uſe.

But now a ſerious word about the play. —
Auſpicious ſmile on this his firſt eſſay,
Ye generous Britons! *your own ſons inſpire;*
Let your applauſes fan their native fire.
Then other Shakeſpears *yet may rouze the ſtage,*
And other Otways *melt another age.*

4 AP 54

FINIS.

A NUPTIAL SONG, *intended to have been inſerted in the* Fourth Act.

COME, gentle *Venus!* and aſſwage
A warring world, a bleeding age.
For nature lives beneath thy ray,
The wintry tempeſts haſte away,
A lucid calm inveſts the ſea,
Thy native deep is full of thee;
And flowering earth, where'er you fly,
Is all o'er ſpring, all ſun the ſky.
A genial ſpirit warms the breeze;
Unſeen, among the blooming trees,
The feather'd lovers tune their throat,
The deſart growls a ſoften'd note,
Glad o'er the meads the cattle bound,
And love and harmony go round.
But chief, into the human heart
You ſtrike the dear delicious dart;
You teach us pleaſing pangs to know,
To languiſh in luxurious woe,
To feel the generous paſſions riſe,
Grow good by gazing, mild by ſighs;
Each happy moment to improve,
And fill the perfect year with love.
Come, thou delight of heaven and earth!
To whom all creatures owe their birth;
Oh come, red-ſmiling! tender, come!
And yet prevent our final doom.
For long the furious god of war
Has cruſh'd us with his iron car,
Has rag'd along our ruin'd plains,
Has curs'd them with his cruel ſtains,
Has clos'd our youth in endleſs ſleep,
And made the widow'd virgin weep.

Now

Now let him feel thy wonted charms;
Oh take him to thy twining arms!
And, while thy boſom heaves on his,
While deep he prints the humid kiſs,
Ah then! his ſtormy heart controul,
And ſigh thy ſelf into his ſoul.
Thy ſon too, *Cupid*, we implore,
To leave the green *Idalian* ſhore;
Be he, ſweet god! our only foe;
Long let him draw the twanging bow,
Transfix us with his golden darts,
Pour all his quiver on our hearts,
With gentler anguiſh make us ſigh,
And teach us ſweeter deaths to die.

Juſt publiſhed the following BOOKS, *printed for* A. MILLAR.

1. COllections relating to the Hiſtory of *Mary* Queen of *Scotland*; containing a great Number of original Papers never before printed: Alſo a few ſcarce Pieces reprinted, taken from the beſt Copies, by the learned and judicious *James Anderſon*, Eſq; late Poſt-Maſter-General, and Antiquary of *Scotland:* With an explanatory Index of the obſolete Words; and Prefaces ſhewing the Importance of theſe Collections, in 4 Vols. on a fine imperial Paper, and a moſt beautiful Letter, 4*to*.

2. Spring, a Poem, the Second Edition, by Mr. *Thomſon*.

3. An Eſſay on the Education of a young *Britiſh* Nobleman after he leaves the Schools; to which is added, ſome Obſervations on the Office of an Ambaſſador.

4. A Syſtem of Heraldry, Speculative and Practical: With the true Art of *Blazon*, according to the moſt approved Heralds in *Europe*. Illuſtrated with ſuitable Examples of armorial Figures at Atchievements of the moſt conſiderable Surnames and Families in *Scotland*, &c. Together with Hiſtorical and Genealogical Memorials relating thereto. By *Alex. Niſbett*, Eſq; *Folio*.

Soon will be publiſh'd

6. The Hiſtory of the Church under the Old Teſtament from the Creation of the World; with a particular Account of the State of the *Jews* before and after the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, and down to the preſent Time: Wherein the Affairs and Learning of *Heathen* Nations before the Birth of *Chriſt*, are alſo illuſtrated; to which is adjoyned a Diſcourſe to promote the Converſion of the *Jews* to *Chriſtianity*, by *Robert Millar*, M. A.

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